

THE POEMS OF
FRANCIS ORRAY TICKNOR



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THE POEMS OF FRANCIS ORRAY TICKNOR

Edited and Collected by his Granddaughter

MICHELLE CUTLIFF TICKNOR



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DEDICATION

TO ROSALIE

[To his wife, R. N. T.]

How shall I sing to thee?
What shall the measure be,
Star of my reverie,
Loveliest Rosalie,
Purest of Pearls?
Smooth as thy forehead fair?
Sweet as thine eyelids are?
Soft as thy curls?

As from the starry vines
Of the white jessamines,
When the first planet shines,
Only at even,
Incense, the wanton day
Vainly would woo away,
Freed from the bending spray,
Rises to Heaven;

As in the forest dim,
Cradled in mossy rim,
Murmurs the fountain's hymn,
Seeking no river;
Lulling the lily's sleep,
Watching the shadows creep,
And the stars quiver;
Such should my measure be,
Such were my minstrelsie,
Maid of my reverie
Sacred and sweet to thee,
Or silent forever.

TORCH HILL, 1855

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BIOGRAPHY OF
FRANCIS ORRAY TICKNOR

(November 13, 1822—December 18, 1874)

By MICHELLE CUTLIFF TICKNOR

"One of the truest and sweetest lyric poets the country has yet produced." Thus Paul Hamilton Hayne characterized Francis Orray Ticknor, who was born in Fortville, Jones County, Georgia (near Baldwin), on the 13th of November, 1822.

His parents were from Connecticut. In 1815 Dr. Orray Ticknor, a physician of Columbia, Conn., moved to Savannah, Ga., where he married Miss Harriot Coolidge of Norwich Town, Conn. She was a daughter of Henry Joseph and Lucy Jones Coolidge, who came from Connecticut to Georgia about 1800. Henry Joseph Coolidge died in Savannah in 1803, aged thirty-seven.

Soon after his marriage to Harriot Coolidge, Dr. Orray Ticknor moved to Fortville, where their three children, James, Lucy Elizabeth and Francis Orray, were born. The latter was not five months old when his father died. Of his death a Georgia newspaper for March, 1823, contained this notice: "Died, at Fortville, Jones county, on the 10th inst., in the thirty-third year of his age, Dr. Orray Ticknor, a native of Connecticut, but for seven years past a citizen of

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this State. In the death of this amiable man it may be justly said society, as well as his family and friends, has suffered an irreparable loss. Although not in possession of riches, that bauble which attracts the attention and the admiration of the world, he possessed in himself a treasure of imperishable virtues. As a friend, a husband, a father and a philanthropist he was not surpassed. His companions can never think of him without emotions of pleasure while dwelling on his many virtues, or without regret at his sudden and unexpected death. For his disconsolate and amiable companion with three small children it would be unfeeling to suppress the grateful tear of sympathy. If medical skill, or the wishes of numerous acquaintances, could have saved him, he had surely yet lived ; but the inscrutable and unerring decree of Jehovah directs otherwise."

A few years after the death of her husband, Harriot Ticknor moved to Columbus, Ga., to procure better advantages for her little family. She was an unusually brilliant woman, possessing a remarkable mind, a liberal education and sterling qualities, which she devoted to the advancement of her children.

James was educated as an Episcopal clergyman. Lucy Elizabeth married first the Rev. Mr. Cairns ; second, Mr. Dillingham. Francis Orray, or Frank, as he was called, the subject of this sketch, was sent to Massachusetts, where he received a collegiate education. On finishing there he had a thorough medical training in New York and Philadelphia.

After graduating at the latter city he spent the year of 1842 in Norwich Town, Conn., in the old home, the birthplace of his mother, built two hundred years ago by his great-great-grandfather, Silvanus Jones, and still standing on Elm avenue.

While in Norwich Frank was the constant companion of the leading physician of the town, accompanying him on his visits to patients. His first cousin, Mrs. Harriot Coolidge Robinson, who still lives in the old house, gives her recollections of him at that time thus: "An attractive young gentleman, with high forehead and smooth face, a sweet face. I can see it now, though nearly sixty years have elapsed since I saw him. I remember him sitting at a table piled high with books, with the one he was studying at the top, so that he was obliged to sit up very straight. He would draw comic pictures of my sister Mary and myself for our entertainment. He was full of fun, overflowing!"

The only picture of him in existence is a sketch by his sister-in-law, Mrs. Evelyn Page Carter, and considered a good likeness. He is described as a man of medium height, slender, with high forehead and beautiful gray eyes. As a boy a stranger said on seeing him pass that "he was the most beautiful boy she had ever seen."

After his studies in the North he settled at Shell Creek, Lumpkin County, Georgia, in the heart of the piny woods. According to his letters the name "Shell Creek is derived from the immense masses of ante-

diluvian shells which were found there in digging, and which, in the form of marl, comprise the borders of our creek. The deposit is in some places fifty feet deep."

The solitude of the country so suddenly contrasted with the life of the cities was at first almost unbearable to him. His letters to his dearest friend, and, later, brother-in-law, William Nelson, written during his sojourn at Shell Creek give a graphic account of the place, the "natives," and that stage of his life. To a man with his almost unlimited fund of knowledge the lack of companions able to appreciate and understand his higher feelings often occasioned a sense of desolation. However, instead of living within himself, and looking entirely to books for society, he lived and worked among the people, and for them, with the determination of gaining their affections. How well he succeeded in this was attested by the universal mourning at his death. The flute and his "verse-making" were his chief recreations from the routine of practice.

He married Rosalie, youngest daughter of Major Thomas Mauduit Nelson of Virginia, great granddaughter of Secretary Thomas Nelson of the Colonial Council of Virginia and grandniece of Thomas Nelson, signer of the Declaration of Independence. Major Thomas M. Nelson served as captain of infantry in the war of 1812, at the close of which he was promoted for gallant service to the rank of major, and presented with a gold sword by his State.

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Later he figured as a prominent member of Congress. In 1840 he moved to Wynnton, Columbus, Ga., where on January 18, 1847, he gave his daughter, then nineteen years of age, in marriage to Dr. Ticknor.

Mrs. Ticknor and her two sisters were widely known and honored for their intellect and graces of manner. To quote the poet himself: "From what I know of Rosalie, Evelyn and Maria, it would take an extra sense not given to man to find a higher, truer womanhood than they possess."

Shell Creek continued to be the home of Dr. Ticknor and his wife until after 1850. Two children, Harry and Lucy Evelyn, were born there, but both died in childhood. Their other children are Dr. Douglas Cairns of Columbus, Ga.; George William, who died in Columbus, aged thirty-nine; Maria Nelson, died aged seven; Thomas Michelle of Albany, Ga. (the father of the author of this sketch, married December 29, 1886, Miss May V. Cutliff of Albany); Francis Orray and William Nelson, also of Albany, the other sons, are married and are successful business men.

From Shell Creek the Ticknors moved to Torch Hill, seven miles from Columbus. According to tradition, a famous Indian battle was once fought on the hill by torch light, hence the name, although some attribute it to the red clay soil of that part of the State. Of his home Paul Hayne says: "Anything more picturesque than the view from Torch

Hill would be hard to imagine. The house overlooks for miles on miles the Chattahoochee Valley, full of waving grain fields and opulent orchards.

"With the poet's love for all that is pure, sweet and natural, he (Ticknor) soon surrounded his home with flowers and fruits. In the spring and summer I have heard it described as a perfect Eden of roses, while toward autumn the crimson foliage and blushing tints of the great mellow apples, especially if touched with sunset lights, caused the 'Hill' to gleam and glitter as with the colors of fairyland. Here in this peaceful nest Ticknor lived for nearly a quarter of a century, exceptionally blessed in his domestic relations, though more than once that Dark Presence no mortal can shun entered his household, to leave it for a season desolate. Here he dreamed high dreams and beheld pleasant visions."

Flowers and fruits amounted to almost a passion with the poet, as also did music. He was familiar with all the operas of the day, and was himself a skilful performer on the flute. Often he would steal into the woods with that instrument and play, as in fact he wrote, merely for his own pastime.

With such a temperament he was naturally sensitive, and had a horror of having his own manuscripts lying around. His wife tells how she hid every scrap of his writing as a priceless treasure, and that often on her return from a visit she found that he had discovered and burned them, though he was careful to save any useless scribbings of the children.

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When the Civil War grew from fear into a reality, he espoused the cause of the Confederacy. Dr. C. Alphonso Smith says: "He was a man of rooted convictions, but without bitterness. The prayer of his heart was for peace, as in 'Ora Pace.'"

So kindly was his nature, that even during the awful days of Reconstruction his word-painting of men and matters of the times contain no violent harangues. They were for the most part harmless caricatures of incidents, many now forgotten, which appealed to his sense of humor. His soul was able to rise above the turbulent times, and sing:

"Though the darkness of desolation
Comes close to each home and heart,
Though the 'Raven' retains his station,
And his shadow will not depart—
His burthen of life is lightest
Who stoutly accepts the Past,
And lives in the hopes of the brightest,
And 'works' for the *best* till the last."

This poet-physician was never commissioned, so he was never engaged in field service, but was in charge of the hospitals in and about Columbus. All his time was required to attend the sick and wounded, and his death from pneumonia on December 18, 1874, at the age of fifty-two years, is attributed to exposure at this period.

No better brief summary of his life and work can be made than that given by Paul Hayne: "Art opened to his soul not one alone, but several of her fairest domains. He was a gifted musician, playing

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exquisitely upon the flute, and a draughtsman of the readiest skill and taste. Still I picture him always as pre-eminently the poet—the poet ‘born,’ yet with every natural endowment purified and strengthened by careful, scholarly culture.

“Thus much for one side of his life. There was another side, stirring, practical, and often rife, as the physician’s career necessarily must be, with sad or terrible details. If a spiritual ‘Lotos-Eater’ while ‘sporting with his muse in the shade,’ he was all energy, eagerness and well-directed power in the paths of his profession. No more experienced doctor or successful scientist than he could be found in the county which chanced to be the scene of his labors. He united a broad humanity and a tender graciousness of tone and bearing to the information of the savant and the skill of the medical expert. Everybody loved him, especially the suffering poor, to whom he devoted a great deal of his time and attention. Unostentatious in his religion, but profoundly sincere in his Christian belief and practice, he regarded the poverty-smitten and the unfortunate as pensioners directly assigned to his care by Providence.

“Far and wide among the ‘sand-barrens’ or in the farmhouses of the neighboring valley the good and wise physician was known and welcomed. His gleeful smile, his spontaneous witticisms (for his mind actually bubbled over with innocent humors), cheered many a despondent invalid, and, it is pos-

sible, scared Despair, if not Death himself, away from the bedsides of patients just about finally to succumb.

"What wonder, therefore, that when—partly through fatigue, exposure and the unremitting discharge of duty—their benefactor was in his turn stricken down to die after a brief, painful illness, the community mourned him as only those are mourned who could truly say, like Abou ben Adhem, in his vision of the Angel and the Book of Gold, 'Write me as one who loved his fellow-men.'

"This imperfect outline of Ticknor's life was necessary to the full comprehension of his poetry. 'Brief swallow-flights of song' only were possible to a man whose days and nights were so occupied by important and exciting toils. And in some respects this was fortunate, since the comparatively little leisure enjoyed by the poet forced him to concentrate his powers—to utilize them to the very best advantage.

"When the great Civil War began Ticknor had just reached the verge of middle age. His intellectual forces were in their fullest bloom, and so it is not surprising that many of his ablest songs belong to this period."

Most of Dr. Ticknor's verses were written on prescription blanks while in the saddle. His patients, knowing his fondness for writing, would frequently supply him paper with which to while away the time during a watch by a bedside. On one occasion, in

the cabin of a painfully destitute family, the father handed him "Prometheus, half unbound," as the poet wrote, saying: "It ain't nothin' to read, but there's a page of white inside if you want to write."

His son Douglas tells how, in accompanying his father on his rides, he would often be given the reins while Dr. Ticknor would write line after line on the margin of his newspaper. Thus "The Gray Going Home," written to his horse that had served through the war, was scribbled on the edges of a *New York Times* while driving at twilight from Columbus to Torch Hill, with the horse much bespattered with red mud.

Lucian Lamar Knight says: "Minstrelsy and medicine are usually too much at variance to mix in the Temple of the Muses, but Dr. F. O. Ticknor, while urging his horse over the country roads around Columbus, bore his saddle-bags into fame by making his prescription blanks the leaflets on which he wrote his immortal lyrics. The spontaneity of his genius is sufficiently attested by the sprightly measure of his verses, which vividly suggest the stirrup. Intent upon his professional engagements, he gathered his inspiration chiefly by the roadside; but never galloped horseman more surely into fame since Paul Revere in 1775 awoke the dawn of American Independence and bore the signal fires to Lexington.

"The rhythmic ring of the horse's hoof can be distinctly heard in the opening lines of the poem entitled: 'The Sword in the Sea':

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“The billows plunge like steeds that bear
The knights with snow-white crests;
The sea-winds blare like bugles where
The Alabama rests.”

In 1879 Miss Kate Mason Rowland published a small volume of Dr. Ticknor's poems, which is the only edition previous to this. It contains an introductory notice by Paul Hayne, which has been freely quoted in this sketch. Any changes from Miss Mason's book are made from the original manuscripts. Ill-health prevented Paul Hayne from compiling a complete volume of Dr. Ticknor's work. There existed between the two poets a warm personal friendship and mutual admiration.

Mrs. Ticknor still, at the age of eighty-one, retains every faculty and the lovely qualities which have endeared her to all. She is a devout Churchwoman, and has always been interested in noble charities for the betterment of the working people. She is excessively modest, with great gentleness of disposition, and an extensive reader over a wide range of literature. One of the earliest recollections of her is as she read aloud to her boys in a soft, low voice—that “most excellent thing in woman”—at the same time knitting some garment to give comfort to others. Dr. C. Alphonso Smith describes her as “a woman in every way fitted to quicken by appreciation her husband's devotion to letters and to enter by her breadth of sympathy into the wider and more practical demands of his profession.

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“The author of this sketch would like to assure her that her loyalty to her husband’s memory, her just appreciation of his real worth as a man and as a poet, and her unshaken confidence in the ultimate triumph of his name and fame have already been vindicated by the verdict of the years and have themselves become a part of the history of Southern literature.”

FRANCIS ORRAY TICKNOR*

The Lyric Poet of Georgia

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE

No one acquainted with the poetical literature of the late war can have forgotten the noble contributions to it of Dr. Francis Orray Ticknor, of Columbus, Ga. "The Virginians of the Valley" and "Little Giffin" are alone sufficient to prove that Dr. Ticknor was a genuine poet, and he has left behind him (for alas! he died two years ago) a large number of other pieces, almost all of them bearing the stamp of genius; and so admirable both in conception and execution, that for the honor of the State, no less than his own, they ought to be collected and published in book form. Dr. Ticknor was essentially a lyricist. Invariably his thought molded itself into the lyrical form, and we find in his best and characteristic verses a resonance of meter and a rhythmic ring ("as it were, the sounding of some silver trumpet,") which fires the blood and causes the heart to beat a bold, martial measure.

Take the following poem, which has too often been published anonymously, as a brilliant illustration of its author's power. It refers to the indomitable bravery of our "left wing" at Manassas—the First Manassas—and is truly as gallant a "war

*From the *Augusta Chronicle*, September 4, 1876.
1858

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song" as ever was penned, from the age of Tyrannus
to the time of Walter Scott!

OUR LEFT

First Manassas

From dawn to dark they stood
That long midsummer day,
 While fierce and fast
 The battle blast
Swept rank on rank away.

From dawn to dark they fought,
With legions torn and cleft;
 And still the wide
 Black battle-tide
Poured deadlier on "Our Left."

They closed each ghastly gap;
They dressed each shattered rank;
 They knew—(how well!)—
 That Freedom fell
With that exhausted flank.

"Oh, for a thousand men
Like these that melt away!"
 And down they came,
 With steel and flame,
Four thousand to the fray!

They leaped the laggard train—
The panting steam might stay—
 And down they came,
 With steel and flame—
Four thousand to the fray.

Right through the blackest cloud
Their lightning path they cleft;
 And triumph came—
 With deathless fame—
To "Our" unconquered "Left."

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Ye, of your sons secure,
Ye, of your dead bereft,
Honor the brave
Who died to save
Your *all* upon "Our Left."

I beg my readers to remark the fiery terseness, the concentrated vigor and spirit of this fine lyric. There is not a single unnecessary word, far less line in it, from the beginning to the end. And, like all true battle-lyrics, it is passionately picturesque. One sees the contending hosts; the flash of arms and the desperate struggle for supremacy; the dust, the turmoil, the desperation, the horror! And just when all hope seems lost to the feebler party, how like a whirlwind we behold the "four thousand push headlong to the fray"! In a different vein, but full of pregnant though homely humor, is Ticknor's ballad called "The Old Rifleman." Nobody, not even the most furious of the old Abolitionists, need take offense at this poem now. It has become part of the ballad literature of the country; for sectionalism in literature is, or at all events ought to be, dead. I don't see why a Yankee soldier himself should not laugh at the description of "Old Bess'" virtues in the shooting line. Of course twelve years ago it was very different. "Bess" might have been considered rather personal in her attentions just then. I quote this spirited ballad entire:

THE OLD RIFLEMAN

Now bring me out my buckskin suit,
My pouch and powder too;
We'll see if seventy-six can shoot
As sixteen used to do!

Old Bess, we've kept our barrel bright,
Our trigger quick and true,
As far, if not as fine a sight,
As long ago we drew!

And pick me out a trusty flint!
A real white and blue!
Perhaps 'twill win the other tint
Before the hunt is through!

Give boys your brass percussion caps,
Old "shut-pan" suits us well,
There's something in the spark; perhaps
There's something in the smell!

We've seen the red-coat Briton bleed;
The red-skin Indian too;
We've never thought to draw a bead
On Yankee-Doodle-Doo!

But Bessie! bless your dear old heart!—
Those days are mostly done,
And now we must revive the art
Of shooting on the run.

If Doodle must be meddling, why
There's only this to do—
Select the dark spot in his eye
And let the daylight through!

And if he doesn't like the way,
That Bess presents the view,
He'll maybe change his mind, and stay
Where the good Doodles do!

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As Timrod was par excellence the war-poet of South Carolina, so was Ticknor the war-poet of Georgia. I would fain remind our generous-hearted people of what he has done (let me repeat) for their fame quite as much as his own; and thus inaugurate measures whereby the intellectual remains of a versatile, manly, yet tender genius may be collected and preserved for the benefit of coming generations! Ah, fellow-countrymen, it is an ancient truth, but how little regarded, that the materialisms of trade and commerce and finance are not all that constitute a nation's glory. Strengthen your trade prosperity by an alliance with the vitality of art. Do not honor exclusively (as too often you have done hitherto) your great agricultural and railroad capitalists, your heroes of the loom, the bank, the exchange, but reserve a place in your esteem and grateful remembrance for those who have wrought through spiritual and mental agencies, and whose words, with recognition, shall not die!

TICKNOR'S POEMS—CRITICISMS

In his introductory notice of Dr. Ticknor, Hayne criticises his poems as follows:

“‘The Virginians of the Valley.’ Is not this, reader, a splendid lyric? Whether you are of the North or the South, especially now that the old sectional animosities seem to be dying out, I feel sure you must alike admire it. The verve and fire of the conception and the straightforward simple powers of the execution make it a most impressive ballad. James Russel Lowell in a recent ‘Ode’ has eloquently praised Virginia; but there is a heart-drawn pathos, a half-subdued passion, in Ticknor’s poem which seems to be more effective still. Apropos of the latter’s style, James Maurice Thompson, himself so true a lyrist, has remarked that ‘it is best suited to forceful ballads. Something in the direct, clear, ringing expression of his ‘Virginians’ reminds us of

“‘Mais quand la pauvre champagne,
Fut en proie aux étrangers,
Lui, bravant tous les dangers,
Semblait seul tenir la campagne.’”

“‘With Ticknor, as with Beranger, strength is simplicity, art is naturalness.’ Mr. Thompson continues: ‘Few poets acknowledge that, to stir the feelings and reach the inmost heart of the masses, one must make use of these materials which are suited to the vulgar understanding. See the final stanza of

that inimitable ballad, "La Vache Perdue," by Casimer Delavigne:

"Un soir, à ma fenêtre,
Neva, pour t'abriter,
De la corne peut-être,
Tu reviendras heurter.
Si la famille est morte,
Neva.
Qui t'ouvrira la porte,
Ah! ah! Neva!"

"Now Ticknor's ballad of "Little Giffen" is a ballad precisely of the style of Delavigne. The opening stanza is a bold swell of music, something clarion-like. . . . The identical rhyme of the last couplet one loses sight of in the exceeding terseness of the language, the outright vigor of the rhetorical stroke. Most poets dally with their conceptions. But this one seizes his idea at once, thrusts it into a position of strong relief, fastens it there, and is done. Technically speaking, his style is dynamic. . . . The poem rounds off half-solemnly, half-playfully. . . . Now here is no straining after effect, *no floundering to get up a foam*; but that sturdy art which is the spirit of a genuine popular ballad.'

"Another poem, which explains itself—an absolutely perfect ballad (me judice)—I cannot resist the pleasure of extracting. Was ever the historical incident it commemorates more feelingly and vividly described? These verses are simply entitled 'Loyal.' . . . A single other lyric associated with the war

and its sorrows, and I shall close, 'Unknown.' . . . Ah! how many thousands must be still living to whom this ballad, rounded and limpid as a tear, though simple almost to baldness in expression, must appeal with a pathos not to be resisted! Burns himself was not more direct, more transparently honest in his metrical appeals, than Ticknor. There are no fantastic conceits, no far-fetched similes, no dilettanteism of any sort in his verses.

"The man's soul—sturdy, yet gentle, stalwart, yet touched by a feminine sweetness—'informed' them always; and, if it can hardly be said of his lyrics that each was 'polished as the bosom of a star,' still the light irradiating them seldom failed to be light from the heaven of a true inspiration."

Charles W. Hubner, in his "Representative Southern Poets," says: "It would seem that the vocation of a 'country doctor,' with its hard work day and night, its monotonous round of constant and exhaustive duties, making heavy drafts upon all the mental and physical resources, besides the lack of the stimulating social and intellectual influences which characterize metropolitan life—it would seem that such an environment would offer slight inducements and few opportunities to anyone so situated, to cultivate esthetics, indulge in dreams of the imagination, and time for wooing the Muse of Poetry. But genius is an insistent, an irresistible power; it penetrates every barrier, overcomes every obstacle, making them, indeed, stepping-stones to success, and

finds congenial nourishment for its sustenance, and the enjoyment of the divinest delights of life, in circumstances and environments which, to ungifted natures, would be as dry and barren as sands of the desert. A 'country doctor' of the finest type of his profession, a good and, therefore, a noble man, and a poet of decided genius, was Dr. Francis O. Ticknor. . . . In his martial lyrics and poems Ticknor's genius exhibits itself in its most impressive flights. In the power of passionate feeling, in terse, concentrated diction, clear, ringing music, and idealistic imagery, the poetry evolved by the incidents, the pathos, the glory and the gloom of our Civil War shows but few examples that can be considered superior to the best of Ticknor's contributions to that phase of our American literature. . . .

"Another poem of his, which commemorates the fate of the Confederate cruiser *Alabama* and twines a wreath of laurel about the name of its gallant captain, also fully reaches the high-water mark of Ticknor's lyric gift; its rhythmic, easy swing, its allusions to the splendor and mystery of the sea, its wealth of fine metaphors, and the spirit of olden romance breathing from its vivid and throbbing lines, place it in the foremost of ballads of its kind. . . .

"A word or two of Ticknor's rare gem of a poem called 'Little Giffen,' one of his war-ballads. It is better known, perhaps, than any other of his poems, and well deserves its prominent place in the volumi-

TICKNOR'S POEMS—CRITICISMS

nous collection of our American war poetry. Its terrible pathos, its stern realism,—picturing in a few masterly lines the horror, the gloom and glory of war,—the passion of patriotism, the heroic sense of duty inflaming the soul of even a mere boy of sixteen, and the splendid fervor of the concluding stanza give to this ballad the distinction it has won in popular esteem. While there were scores of such youthful heroes on both sides in our Civil War, yet the fact that this poem was not the creation of a poet's fancy, but the incident as related actually happened—Dr. Ticknor being the “good Samaritan” who took the poor battle-battered stripling-hero to his house and nursed him—adds unique interest to the story.

“In Link's ‘Pioneers of Southern Literature’ Dr. Ticknor is spoken of thus: ‘The one who has written some of the best poetry produced in America is the least known of all our poets.’ A few years ago Mr. Powell, one of the editors of *The Independent*, wrote in reference to a poem as follows: ‘If it be possible to have collected and put out a volume of lyrics like that, it will constitute the finest volume ever issued in the United States, if not in the English language.’ This poem was entitled ‘Loyal,’ and was written by Dr. Frank O. Ticknor. . . . While Ticknor's war songs were full of fire and verve, he was not alone or chiefly a war poet, but sang of friends and home with delightful charm. This was natural, since he loved his friends, and

TICKNOR'S POEMS—CRITICISMS

made his own home so beautiful. 'Twilight,' 'Among the Birds,' 'The Hills,' 'The Flowers,' and many others show that he saw things about him with a poet's eyes—that the spirit of poesy often came down upon the grand doctor and decked all the dear familiar scenes with a halo of beauty. How much must such a man get out of life! He loved the beautiful, and portrayed it because he could not help it. He loved the heroic, hence martial fire leaped from his pen. What would have been to others a red-headed, freckled-face, crippled soldier boy, was to him a hero, a knight of princely courage. Next to enacting great deeds and living great lives is the ability to understand and be lifted up by the greatness and unselfishness of heroic human souls. This man of heroic mold, but womanly sweetness, is himself a poem of precious beauty. The ideal life sparkles out through all his jeweled lines. The busy doctor died in the prime of life, and deep was the grief of his neighbors. He loved them, and they loved him, though they suspected not all his greatness of soul. He had lived his creed:

"The man with little love shall find
But little loving in mankind;"

"He had laid out for humanity earnest zeal and unselfish devotion. . . .

"The real description of this lettered country-man is found in 'Poeta in Rure.' . . . Ticknor's love for children is shown in his child songs, fresh and

TICKNOR'S POEMS—CRITICISMS

playful. Of that kind, 'Whip-Poor-Will' and the 'Echo Story' are among the most sprightly ever penned. . . . Among his religious poems, 'The Beauty of Holiness,' 'Easter,' and 'The Church' are full of cheerful hope and redolent with sacred beauty. . . . While his range of poetic vision was not so extensive as that of some others, while he might resemble the old harpsichord of one unbroken string of which he sings:

"One chord in thy heart unbroken!
One key to that chord alone!
A touch—and thy thought hath spoken;
A sign—and thy song hath flown!"

yet he had the true poetic insight. When the reckoning shall have been made, it will be found that this unostentatious country physician has made a permanent addition to American literature."

"There is more than music in his verse," writes Holliday in his "History of Southern Literature." "Oftentimes there is a deal of fire and vim in these lyrics. Notice in 'Little Giffen' the dramatic abruptness with which this story of a wounded boy is told, how in reading one almost forgets the rhyme and rhythm in the eagerness to hear the story. True art does not display its art. The same intensity might be illustrated by others of his simple, ballad-like poems—'Loyal,' for instance. Ticknor is known best by his war-poems; but some of his nature poems are of superior merit. 'The Hills,' 'Among the Birds,' 'April Morning' and others whose titles are

significant show the man's love for those things 'whose Maker and Builder is God.' Here, then, we have one who wrote, and wrote well, with no hope of reward from the outside world. Many of his poems never appeared in periodicals. He sang simply because he loved to sing. Therefore in the unaffected lines we find each thought and each emotion singularly imbued with sincerity and sweetness."

"Perhaps with more leisure," writes Dr. W. P. Trent in his "Southern Writers," "Ticknor would have secured a considerably higher place in Southern literature; yet the work he did, despite its limitations, ought to have given him more fame during his life and secured him much more consideration from posterity than has been allotted him."

Dr. Ewald Flugel, in his "Die Nordamerikanische Literatur" (Leipzig and Wien, 1907), page 529, says:

"Ein klassisches Kriegsgedicht von der sudlichen Seite, das Theodore O'Hara's 'Bivouak der Toten' an Bedeutung erreicht, ist das Meisterstück des Arztes Francis Orray Ticknor (1822-74) 'Der Kleine Giffen von Tennessee' (Little Giffen of Tennessee), die Geschichte des Heldenknaben von achtzehn Schlachten und sechzehn Jahren; der von seinem Sterbebette aufspringt, um seinem alten Führer in die letzte Schlacht zu folgen."

LITTLE GIFFEN

"Little Giffen" is, perhaps, the best known of Dr. Ticknor's poems. Maurice Thompson says: "If there is a finer lyric than this in the whole realm of poetry I should like to read it." In his "Library of Southern Literature" Dr. C. Alphonso Smith says: "In the simplicity of its pathos, the intensity of its appeal, and the dramatic concentration of its thought 'Little Giffen' ranks among the best short poems of American literature." The same author, in his "Address on Southern Literature," places it among the first of the "seven occasional poems" of America. Pancoast in his "Introduction to American Literature" writes that it "has a concentrated force and directness which make it not unworthy of comparison with some of Browning's shorter narrative poems."

"Little Giffen" first appeared in November, 1867, in *The Land We Love*, a paper published at Charlotte, N. C., by General D. H. Hill. The story is true in every detail.

During the Civil War places of business were often converted into temporary hospitals, and to one of these—the old "Banks" building, still standing at Columbus, Ga.,—the boy Giffen was brought, having been wounded, probably at Murfreesboro or Chickamauga. Mrs. Rosa Nelson Ticknor with her sisters, Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Woolfolk, daily visited

LITTLE GIFFEN

the improvised hospitals to administer to the sufferers. Mrs. Ticknor was strongly drawn towards "Little Giffen." After her return to her home, seven miles from town, she remembered the sharpness of the boy's bones against her hands as she raised him for nourishment. On Dr. Ticknor's arrival she begged him to bring Giffen to Torch Hill, which he did, in his own carriage, though the attending surgeon insisted that it was worse than useless. Dr. and Mrs. Ticknor with the aid of a faithful "Mammy" nursed Giffen back to health after many weary weeks of suspense. During his convalescence Mrs. Ticknor taught him to read and write. According to accounts he was an ordinary-looking little fellow, except for his eyes. His name was Isaac Newton Giffen, and his father was a blacksmith in the mountains of east Tennessee. So much is certain. His part in eighteen battles and freedom from injury except in the last, the story of his march, wounded and ill, how he and others would lie down in the road to drink the water from mud-puddles, and other events of his war career, were sources of untiring entertainment to the children, and by amusing them he was a great help to Mrs. Ticknor. Giffen came to Torch Hill in September, 1863, and left in March, 1864. On the day of his departure he and Douglas Ticknor started from Torch Hill to Columbus, riding an old gray army horse; at Bull Creek the water was unusually high and the horse lost the road, fell into a washout, and both boys were

LITTLE GIFFEN

thrown. Douglas and the horse came ashore on the Torch Hill side, while the current carried Giffen across the creek. From there he waved his last good-by, and climbed wet and muddy into the wagon of a negro going to town. Nothing further was ever heard of him, and there is no doubt that he met death in some immediate encounter.

In the first composition the last stanza read :

“Many such on a summer day
Rake the meadows and mow the hay;
Of freckled face and pale blue eye,
To whom no bird or squirrel is shy—
Mark the plainest—and he might be
Little Giffen of Tennessee!”

This was changed by the poet before appearing in print, to :

“I sometime fancy that when I’m king
And my gallant courtiers form a ring,
All so thoughtless of power or pelf,
And each so loyal to all but self,
I’d give the *best*, on his bended knee,
Yea, barter the *whole* for the loyalty
Of little Giffen of Tennessee.”

Later it was rewritten as given in the present version.

SENTIMENT AND HUMOR

SENTIMENT AND HUMOR

GRAY

Something so human-hearted
In a tint that ever lies
Where a splendor has just departed
And a glory is yet to rise!

Gray in the solemn gloaming,
Gray in the dawning skies;
In the old man's crown of honor,
In the little maiden's eyes.

Gray mists o'er the meadows brooding,
Whence the world must draw its best;
Gray gleams in the churchyard shadows,
Where all the world would "Rest."

Gray gloom in the grand cathedral,
Where the "Glorias" are poured,
And, with angel and archangel,
We wait the coming Lord.

Silvery gray for the bridal,
Leaden gray for the pall;
For urn, for wreath, for life and death,
Ever the Gray for all.

Gray in the very sadness
Of ashes and sackcloth; yea,
While our raiment of beauty and gladness
Tarries, our tears shall stay;
And our souls shall smile through their sadness,
And our hearts shall wear the Gray.

January 1, 1868

TICKNOR'S POEMS

THE PRISONER AT GLATZ

From the life of Frederick William III of Prussia

One in his palace: One at the bars
Of a dungeon, under the Alpine stars;
Doomed! and never hath dungeon's scope
Closed on a darker farewell to hope.
Years! and ever that icy gleam;
Years! and only the eagle's scream,
Cleaving the clouds in its sunward flight,
Hath cheered his soul at that awful height.

He hath bared his soul at a deadlier height
With icier bonds, but he weeps to-night.
Not for his hopes that have faded dim;
Nor the failing light, nor the fettered limb!
Other than anguish hath melted him,
That fell with a light from the starry dome
On a single line in an ancient tome,
"In the time of thy trouble, call thou on Me;
And, lo! My love shall deliver thee!"
And his soul is bowed like a bended knee,
And his tears are wept from a heart as full
As the night with stars, with the beautiful
Child-like trust in the Merciful.

One in his palace—the bride of night,
Beautiful sleep, hath fled his sight,
Sick and faint with the woe and weight
Of the golden thorns that crown the great—
Moans, as the stricken who moan for light
In the dark "mid-watch," and at dawn, for night;
"All my realm for the sweet release
From a monarch's pain to a peasant's peace!"

TICKNOR'S POEMS

A soft step stole through the silent gloom,
A sweet voice read from "an ancient tome"—
Sweeter sounds may not soothe the sense—
Of the pitying love and the innocence
Of Christ; and there came the sweep
Of angel's wings, and brought him sleep!

One in his palace, the dawn astir,
Saith to his sweet-voiced Comforter:
"All my realm by the east and west,
All my glory, hath never blest
My soul like this great crown-jewel Rest!
Tell me now of the heaviest woe
That dwells to-day with my deadliest foe
Of yesterday or of long ago;
For, as the Lord hath regarded me,
My soul would pardon mine enemy."

And the soft voice answered: "The sorrow that's
Under the icy stars at Glatz!"
Aye! There are pinions of farther flight
Than the eagle's scream or the Alpine height
To answer the captive's call to-night!
Mercy!—waiting through all our years—
Waiting one signal, our Trust, our Tears!

VISITING THE VALLEY OF THE
SHENANDOAH

Ye walk by famous waters
By famous fountains fed,
Oh, best of Heaven's daughters
In the Eden of the dead,
Where swept the swiftest slaughter
That ever valor led.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Beside the Shenandoah!
 Beneath the willow trees!
The mountains ever more
 Crowned with their memories,
And when shall marble soar
 With blazonings like these?

Look long upon the splendor
 Of mountain and of plain,
Till rays as grand and tender
 Illuminate again
The faith that can't surrender
 While the blue hills remain.

THE OLD HARPSICHORD

"In one room of this deserted mansion we came upon an old harpsichord with a single unbroken string. Evoking the last sound from it, we extracted the key, which you will find herewith.—*Letter from the Old Dominion.*

What of the night, old sleeper?
 What of thy watch so lone?
Of the darkness and dust, and deeper,
 The silence that shrouds thine own?
What song for the tuneless Reaper
 Who binds all songs in one?
Crown thou his sheaf, oh sleeper,
 With a requiem monotone!

One chord in thy heart unbroken!
 One key to that chord alone!
A touch—and thy thought hath spoken;
 A sound—and thy song hath flown!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

A sigh for the single token
Of all who have sung and flown!
Of symphonies ceased forever,
Of harmonies heard no more;
Of chords that have ceased to quiver
Or ever thy task was o'er:
Songs and their symphonies never
Dying in requiems more.

Silence and darkness blended,
Dust on a desolate shore,
Footprints of angels ascended
Around us forevermore.
When the lips of the beautiful singers
With the silvery chords lie cold,
And only an echo lingers
Of the melodies sweet and old,
To blend 'neath their seraph fingers
With a hymn from their harps of gold.

THE COLONNADE

A stillness in the lonely hall,
A shadow on the vacant wall,
A broken hearth, an incense flown,
And dust upon the altar-stone;
What deeper gloom to match the shade
That wraps the lonely Colonnade?

White roses round the columns cling,
White moonbeams in the flow'r may fling
A mingled shadow, when appear
The lost of many a lonely year,
In phantom forms, that meet and fade
Along the lonely Colonnade.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

No more beneath the moonlit leaves
The evening star its song receives;
For many golden chords are riven
That sent that twilight song to heaven,
And scattered far the feet that strayed
Along the lonely Colonnade.

No more in murmured tones rehearse
The Hero's tale, the Lover's verse,
Nor voice of song, nor sigh of flute,
Where lips of sweeter tone are mute;
Oh, lips that loving hands have laid
Far from the lonely Colonnade.

Oh, Sister! if the Past imparts
But dreams of sadness to our hearts,
Why ask we of the coming years
A better blessedness than tears
Amid the pale white flowers arrayed
Along life's lonely Colonnade?

SONG BY NIGHT

Written for the Bachelors' Club of P—, Virginia, and
inscribed to Mrs. C—.

Sing, boys, sing! while the starry wing
Of the night is arching o'er us,
Gentle and low, let the measure flow,
Deepened and full to the chorus.
A song we raise to the buried days,
That were beaming with lightness only,
Ere the brightness fled, ere the loved were dead,
And we were left saddened and lonely.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And are these the days of the darkening haze,
The mists whence no star may quiver?
And is this the moan of the monotone
Of the dark and tideless river?
We look not back on our weary track
For the voice of a vanished chorus;
The lights are gone that have led us on,
But the path lies straight before us.

Let the hair grow white, let the failing sight
Await but a clouded morrow;
We keep the faith that we pledged to Death
And the troth we plighted Sorrow!
There are flowers that bloom by the quiet tomb
Of the gentle, the true, and tender;
And they are all that our prayers recall,
Or the sepulchre can surrender!

Are there forms as fair as we buried there?
Are there lips with such fragrance laden?
Are there sounds as sweet as the bounding feet
That are white 'mid the lilies of Aidenne?
It may be so, but they bring no glow
To hearts that are haunted ever
By the shadow that lies on the shrouded eyes,
And the lips that are sealed forever.

Let Death remove from the brows we love
The damps of his dark'ning river;
Let Heaven restore on its shining shore
The lost whom we love forever!
Their light alone on our pathway thrown,
Their star to our darkness given,
Shall lend its fires to the trembling wires
That are linked to our hearts and Heaven.

December 3, 1856

TO THE LITTLE ROSALIE

Rosa Woolfolk (Mrs. Robert Obear)

A little leaf from the rose's heart,
A little drop of pearl,
To write a little bit of a rhyme
For a little bit of a girl!
Bright as the humming-bird,
Sweet as the honey-bee,
That all who sing to the flowers may sing
To the little Rosalie!

The violet's dyes are in her eyes,
Its softest velvet in
The dimples, the dimples about her cheeks,
The dimple upon her chin!
Ah! well of the little humming-bird,
Ah! well of the little bee,
To sing, to sing to as sweet a thing
As the little Rosalie!

We think, we think of the starward palms
Over the Orient seas,
We drink, we drink of the blended balms
From the bright Hesperides.
We ask, we ask of the golden hours,
Of blossom, and bird, and tree,
A little lyric of stars and flowers
For the little Rosalie!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

IN A SUN-PICTURE

To "Miss Evelyn"

And again! through our mists of sunset,
And the shadows that shroud the day,
There's a bloom from the blush of the morning,
And a balm from the breath of May.

The eyes of the little children!
And the children's voices! sweet
As a clover-scented carol
That bursts at our weary feet!

So our shadows are not so heavy,
And our wrinkles are smooth, in truth,
Our sunset touched by the sunshine
As the world renews its youth.

November, 1871

"NINA"—HER EYES

To Nina M—

I know the summers that can speak
For all the olive of thy cheek;
I know the gentle lineage rare
That crowns thy head with midnight hair;
But whence—don't send me to the skies!—
The splendor, Nina, of your eyes?

Now, Nina, there's your needle! Knit!
Your lashes drooped a little bit;
I'm writing "letters," and afraid
Of brilliant cross-lights; lend me shade.
Nay! there's a dimple at your lips,
And there—you dazzle, past eclipse!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Was it of much or little "grace"
To mock these clouds of commonplace
With a whole summer sunset's dyes,
Because you *must* lift up your eyes?
Sending my missive all amiss,
Turning my "letter" into *this*!

You couldn't help it! Once, amid
A temple's twilight, it betid
The soft glow of a vestal's light
Slept on the crosslet of a knight,
And wrought—nor, Nina, might it less
Of loyalty and tenderness—
The matchless radiance that lies
Deep in the splendor of your eyes!

BROWNIE BELLE, OF THE ESQUILINE

To Belle M. L——, on her return from Europe

Where the almond blossoms first,
Where the nectarines are nursed,
Grew with cedar and with pine,
Grew with violet and vine,
 With her brows of calm,
And her eyes divine,
 With her breath of balm,
And her blush like wine,
Brownie Belle, of the Esquiline.

Grew in grace,
Like the blue glycine;
Grew in grace,
Like a jessamine;

TICKNOR'S POEMS

In stateliness,
Like a Norfolk pine ;
 With a tender gloom
In her eyes divine,
 And her olive bloom
Through her blush like wine ;
 Grew in grace,—
And I knew the girl,
 From her dancing foot
To her floating curl.
 Grew in grace,—
And I knew her well,
 From the honey-dew
To the nectar-cell ;
 From the morning mist,
Till the manna fell
 On the tents, the lips
Of Israel.

In stateliness, like the star of trees
With the silver lace, from the Indian seas,
 When the silver mist
 And the stars are met
 On her coronet ;
On the stately crest of the stateliest
 Star-lit Tree-star,
 Bright Deodar.

Sweet the air of the Esquiline,
From morning prayer till nuts and wine ;
Where the dancing gods of days divine
Might dance on sods embroidered fine
With the richest tints of the ripest wine
Of every land where the sun doth shine.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

We'll garner all
Of the bright and sweet;
We'll lay them all
At our Brownie's feet.
We'll gather all for a garland feast,
When the stars recall *our* star from the
East.
When she comes, she comes
With her balm and bloom;
And the tender gloom
Of her eyes shall shine
To crown the lights of the Esquiline.

1859

TO THE LITTLE LADY ALICE

No *dew* distils on Georgia's hills,
Or yet Circassia's valleys,
That leaves a pearl on lily's curl
As pure as Lady Alice!
My lily-pet! my violet!
My little Lady Alice!

As rare as rise through Southern skies
Aurora-borealis!—
As rare as *Rose* on Northern snows,
Or heart's ease in a palace,
Is she sprite! my brownie bright!
My little Lady Alice!

The wise old Greek his fate might seek,
And bear his foes no malice;
And so might I, my idol's eye,
If *you* but bore the chalice,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And drink to thee in three times three,
My little Lady Alice!
My heart's delight! my star of night!
My perfect little chrysolite!
My little Lady Alice!
1859

SUNBEAM

To Miss Emma V. Chilton

It was an old philosopher,
And also very wise,
That had a little "prism"
And specs upon his eyes;
And he caught a little sunbeam
That he would analyze.

It was a rare philosopher!
He labored days and nights,
And split his little sunbeam
Into—seven—lights;
And he blessed his specs and prism
That showed such lovely sights.

And he gathered mighty glory
For doing little more
Than a little drop of water
Had often done before;
And his name, 'twas Newton, kindles
'Till the light shall shine no more.

Ah! had he caught the sunbeam
Our poet saw one day,
He would have split his prism,
And thrown his specs away;

TICKNOR'S POEMS

A dewdrop could have shown him
More colors to the ray.

Our poet keeps no prism
Nor other glasses,—yet
His simple optics sundered,—
'Twixt pearl and violet,—
At least a half a hundred!—
And he is counting yet!

TO A LADY OF TEXAS IN ITALY

Mrs. Emma Chilton Maverick

A thousand leagues of steam and foam,
To breathe, tho' but an hour, in Rome!
To wake in Florence, or to be
Cradled in Venice by the sea!
Yet sometimes, lady, when thine eyes
Are weary of yon wondrous skies,
With all thy pulses languid grown
To miracles in stain and stone,
Seek thou some sacred fountain dim,
A mirror with its marble rim,
And bend thy "sunbeam" face to see
The fairest thing in Italy!
Yea, lovelier than the sunset seas,
Kindled to guide the Genoese!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

TO —

Offended by a compliment from a stranger

What! must the glowing heart forbear
Its homage to the skies,
When all the glories wandering there
But wake to win our eyes?
Shall earth come forth in vain to wear
Her robe of endless dyes,
And not to aught of bright or fair
Our adoration rise?
Nay, from the sternest soul would steal
The homage it could not conceal.

The stars with but a lovelier ray
Our lowly homage bless;
And earth receives with smiles more gay
Our debt of thankfulness.
Then why the deep emotion stay,
The burning words repress,
That fill the worship we would pay
To woman's loveliness?
As pure as Heaven, than earth more fair,
How dark the soul that bows not there!

SHELL CREEK,
May 12, 1845

THE BRIDE

Mrs. Maria Nelson Woolfolk

Her eyes are bright as stars that keep
Their watch in midnight skies;
Her voice as sweet as winds that sweep
The harps of Paradise.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And thou must quench the starry rays
That make the midnight fair,
Ere thou canst teach the heart to gaze
And not to worship there.

Learn, if thou wilt, from wisdom's store,
The stoic's boasted art;
And lose, like him, the only lore
That could have cheered thy heart.
Then die, for life hath naught of bloom
Around thy path to shine;
And death can bring no deeper gloom
To souls so dark as thine.

THE VALLEY OF NACOOCHEE

"Evening Star"

Child of our Chattahoochee,
Hid in the hills afar;
Oh! beautiful Nacoochee,
Light of the Evening Star!

Smile of the dreaming maiden,
Song of the bird's release;
Grace of the blest in Aidenne,
Valley of light and peace.

Clasped in the mountain shadows,
The May dew on her breast,
Her breath is the balm of meadows,
Her *name* is a hymn to "Rest."

The voice of a loved one calling
To feet that have wandered far:
Return, for the night is falling;
Rest with the Evening Star.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

AMERICA

Editor of the *Southern Statesman*: At a dinner party on Christmas last a toast was given to "The Queen—the Mother of (a good many of) her people." To this was responded, "America: Room enough for them all." The author having expanded the idea into the following lines, begs leave respectfully to inscribe them "To THE KNOW-NOTHINGS."

Room in my country, Room!
Room on her ample breast
For the willing hand to work,
And the weary heart to rest;
For all who flee from the tyranny
Of the "Old World" to the West!

Though under another sun
His childhood saw the sky,
Though under another sod
His father's ashes lie—
A deeper dust on his broken trust
And his darkened memory.

The home our Fathers built
They builded wide and tall,
With many a smiling portal
And never a frowning wall,
And strong without and warm throughout,
And plenty of room for all.

Room in her broad green fields,
Room in her dusky mines,
Where the gliding coulters gleams,
Where the reaper's sickle shines,
Under the eaves of his own green leaves,
Under his own bright vines!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Under his own bright vines!
And none to say him nay!
Room for his hands to rise,
And his fetters to fall away;
Oh! brothers, room for his heart to bloom,
Room for his soul to pray!

To the sufferer over the sea,
To the wanderer at the gate,
To the loftiest in degree,
To the lowliest in estate,
One land alone on the broad earth's zone
Can dare to be truly great!

Dread ye the darkened strength
Of the stranger sad and lone,
Should his soul awake at length
From the sleep his sires have known?
Trust in the God that gave
This green land to your own!
'Tis His to grace, in its fitting place,
The clay as well as the stone.

Though still to the wasted hands
The iron's canker clings,
Though still in his withered heart
The rankling iron wrings;
The oak shall know its time to grow—
The eagle shall find his wings.

Aye! numberless as the sands,
And fetterless as the foam,
'Tis the hand of Heaven that sends—
In God's name let them come!
To a common share of Heaven's own air—
To a Hope as well as a Home.

TORCH HILL, GA., *December, 1854*

TICKNOR'S POEMS

GEORGIA

Between her rivers and beside the sea,
My Mother-land! What fairer land can be?

The lyric rapture in her leaping rills,
The crown-imperial on her purple hills.

Her lips are pure that never breathed a curse;
Her hands are white before the universe.

Behold the witness of the King of Peace
Clear, in the splendor of her dew-lit fleece.

And lo! the midnight of her shrouded mine
Garners the radiance of the years to shine.

Yea! the swart Gnome that bides his time below
Shall rise at last in full regalia glow!

And the great Alchemist shall teach the Sun
That Earth's great gloom and Life's great light
are one!

Oh, sweetest souls that ever rose by prayer
White from the furnace-dungeon of despair!

That wrought new grace from battle's chaos-
mould,

And reared new shrines from ashes not yet cold.

Not cold!—from flames the strangest that have
given

From all this world, an altar-smoke to Heaven!

Crowned on the cross, above high-fetter line,
They smile on hate with Love's own smile divine.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Prouder than hills that plume thy star-ward crest,
Sweeter than dales that dimple at thy breast.

Richer than Rome! when God's great chariot rolls,
Imperial Georgia! count thy children's souls.

VIRGINIA

Triple triumph to thy spears,
Virginia!
Daughter of the cavaliers,
Virginia!
Let the timbrel and the dance
Tell of thine anointed lance,
Tell of thy deliverance,
Virginia!

On the shore and by the sea,
Virginia!
Thou hast triumphed gloriously,
Virginia!
Loftier head of haughtier foe,
Laid in dust of battle low,
Never decked thy saddle-bow,
Virginia!

Awful through thy blinding tears,
Virginia!
Blazed the light of buried years,
Virginia!
Spirits of the mighty dead
Followed still thy battle tread,
Followed where thy falchion led,
Virginia!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Heart to heart, they smote again,
 Virginia!
The savage and the Saracen,
 Virginia!
Soul to soul, as son and sire,
Sword of wrath and heart of fire,
Swept to vengeance swift and dire,
 Virginia!

Mailed in thy immortal wrong,
 Virginia!
Let thy sorrows make thee strong,
 Virginia!
Clothe thee, quarterdeck to keel,
Harness thee from head to heel,
Massive oak and sheeted steel,
 Virginia!

Onward yet, thou heart of gold,
 Virginia!
First in freedom's fight of old,
 Virginia!
Forward yet! the grace that flings
The heart to death above a king's
Shall follow where thy bugle sings,
 Virginia!

“ORA PACE”

Ora Pace! Pray for Peace!
Till these times of tumult cease!
 Ye with heavy hearts and eyes,
 Watchers as the war-clouds rise,
Though the shadows still increase,
Gentle spirits! Pray for Peace!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Ora Pace! Ye that lift
The nation's weapons, keen and swift,
Ere ye loose the thunder, pray
That the wrath may pass away!
Ere the lightnings ye release,
Patriot statesmen, Pray for Peace!

Ora Pace! Ye that stand
The shield and summer of the land;
Though the blood is hot and high,
Bounding for the battle-cry,
Remember, boys, whose kiss ye bear,
And pray for peace, ye sons of Prayer!

Ora Pace! Who shall tread
Our Lilies, when that prayer is said?
Dark may be the sullen tide
Of the stranger's lust and pride,
But, our God shall still increase
The strength that strikes and prays for Peace.

1861

ATLANTIS

Down in the sunless deeps,
Our lost Atlantis sleeps!

Not as she sank below
The deluge long ago.

A star for the bridal drest,
The glory of all the West.

But white in her shrouded rest,
And a chain across her breast.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Shall we weep while the waters roar,
Or work with the Madrepore,

With the nursing fires below,
And the cradling earthquake's throe,

To lift to the light again
Atlantis, from shroud and chain

Slow dawning out of her grave,
Slow widening over the wave,

From the islet's slender spear
To the bloom of a hemisphere

Whose hills salute the morn
With the pomp of palm and corn,

Whose verdurous valleys shine
With the light of the oil and wine?

Ah! better than yonder hind—
Dazzled by triumph blind,

Whose share hath furrowed the sod
To hillocks that cry to God,

Whose scythe, as it sweeps the grain,
Shines with an evil stain—

To toil in the sunless stain,
Where our lost Atlantis sleeps;

To tarry a thousand years
Till her Angel of Light appears.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

BATTLE FOR THE RIGHT

To General James Bethune

"Oh! for the battle where all in all
Is placed on the perilous cast."
—*Marks of Burhamville.*

Then smite, if thy foes are 'round thee,
And thou battlest for the right;
Though the laurel hath ne'er crowned thee,
Thou art victor if thou smite!
But not in thy dreams Elysian
Thou speedest the battle on,
Not in the sleeper's vision
Is the victory lost or won.

Each blow for the truth thou givest
Is a triumph in the war,
Each hour that thou *truly* livest
Thou art truly Conqueror.
Each night of thy sinless slumber
That hails the setting sun,
Thy destiny shall number
As one brave victory won.

TORCH HILL, 1861

THE CONQUEST OF LABOR

Inscribed to Daniel Pratt, Esq., of Prattville

There's a sound on the air of an army in motion,
The thunder of war and the battles' loud boom;
Each breeze that is borne o'er the wide-rolling ocean
Is sad with its terror and dark with its gloom.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

But the sun that goes down on the blood-dripping
sabre

Shall rise on a scene that is lovelier far,
Where the olive grows green and the Laurels of
Labor

Are won in the wild 'neath our own western star.

From the stormy Atlantic their hosts are advancing—

On the far Rocky Mountains their legions are
seen—

Down the wilderness valleys their watch-lights are
glancing,

And the broad blue Pacific exults in their sheen.

Ever around them rich blessings are springing—

Ever before them the darkness retires;

Peace lends her song to their reveille's ringing,

And Plenty reclines by their bivouac fires.

Where round the dark anvil the red forge is gleaming—

Where the swift shuttle flies, where the plow
cleaves the sod—

Round the hearth-stones of Toil rise the ramparts
of Freemen,

The Altars of Home and the Temples of God.

And still may they rise, till their victories speeding

Shall circle the earth with their mission sublime,

Till the world that was fair in the morning of Eden

Shall blossom again in the sunset of Time.

And honor to him who shall honor his station

In the land where his labor its earnest may find;

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Where the works of his hands are the pride of a
nation,
And the worth of his heart is the hope of mankind.

TORCH HILL, GA.,
December 14, 1854

THE RIVER

Hold to the giant river,
Ye, with a giant claim!
Yours from the great All-Giver,
Yours in Jehovah's name!
By fireside, field, and altar,
By temple, by grove, by grave,
By the smiles and tears
Of a hundred years,
By the lifetime toil of your pioneers
And the life-blood of your braves.

De Soto sleeps in its bosom,
Yet the dreamer's dream was truth,
And he left to your watch the waters
Of the world's immortal youth;
Yours from the fount of story,
Yours till oblivion's wave,
By the deed of your day of glory,
By the seal of your Sidney's grave,
For yourselves, for your sons, forever,
And ever, to hold and to have;
The broad and abounding river,
Down to the salt sea wave;
While the waters flow,
While the grasses grow,
Till the last of your race lies cold and low,
Or God forgets the brave!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

UNKNOWN

"To the Women of the South" decorating graves of
Unknown Soldiers.

The prints of feet are worn away,
No more the mourners come;
The voice of wail is mute to-day
As his whose life is dumb.

The world is bright with other bloom;
Shall the sweet summer shed
Its living radiance o'er the tomb
That shrouds the doubly dead?

Unknown! Beneath our Father's face
The star-lit hillocks lie;
Another rosebud! lest His grace
Forget us when we die.

THE CAUCASIAN

Chained to the icy peak,
Rent by the vulture's beak,
Scourged of the bitter brine;
Brother of Caucasus,
The gods have wrought on us
Horrors to rival thine!

In the wilderness wreck we stand,
In the depths of the desolate land,
To our dead in their graves we cry:
"Brothers! that rest in peace
In the land where the wicked cease,
Is it better to live or die?"

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And our dead from their graves reply :
"The Merciful moves on high.

The arm of His strength is nigh,
In the sorrows that learn of Faith
To smile in the eye of Death.

It is braver to live than to die!"

HOLLAND

Brave Holland of the broad sea nursed,
Where the blue billows roll and burst
From the bleak, bitter north. In thee,
Star-crowned with peace and liberty,
We hail "the Venus of the Sea!"

The heart and home of wealth and worth,
The Eden-glory of the earth;
A sea of billowy verdure drest
In rippling green, with lily crest.
In all our woes across the sea,
Bright Holland, Georgia cries to thee!

Scourged by a more than bitter tide—
With the black billows howling wide;
Wrecked to her naked soil and sky—
Reft of her all but memory!
Dear sister of like sorrows, we
Turn in our wasting woes to thee!

Of old, thy virgin liberty
Returned, a vestal, to the sea!
And ours? Her bleeding feet impress
Again the savage wilderness;

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Blest if the desert's depth have wrought
For Freedom as thy deluge fought!

Teach us to front the tempest's gloom
With the long waves of light and bloom;
To plant, where flashed the flying foam,
The constant altar-fires of home,
And the shrill sea-blast's wave prolong
In the shepherd's bell and reaper's song!
To rear, by grace of grass and trees,
Of milky herds and honey-bees,
A second Holland from the seas.

SLAVE OF THE DISMAL SCAMP

A reply to Longfellow's "Slave in the Dismal Swamp"

Under a rattling whirligig,
Which a Yankee had taught to spin,
A maiden sat, with bosom flat,
And fingers long and thin;
And she was the slave of a dismal scamp,
A man with a soul of tin.

And hers was a chest like a coffin lid,
And cheeks like the churchyard clay,
And pulses that feel like the click of steel
Picking a life away.
Daily dying, and toiling still,
For the dismal scamp in his dismal mill,
Under the shadow of Bunker Hill—
What does she sing or say?

TICKNOR'S POEMS

"Oh! why are my eyes so large and bright,
And my fingers so long and thin?"
"The better, my dear, for the spindles' flight,
The faster, my love, to spin"—
Spoke the maiden whose lungs were lint,
And the man with the soul of— tin.

"Would God that my skin were not so white,
And my brain of a lesser size!
And would that my hair were kinked so tight
That I couldn't shut my eyes!
And oh! for an hour in the sunny fields,
Where the snow-white cotton grows;
For the heaviest, hardest task that yields
Free breath and sweet repose!
For a night that never knew a lamp,
And a day that has a close!"

Sung to the rattle and roar and tramp,
In the heart of a merciless mill,
Under the light of a dismal lamp,
And the shadow of Bunker Hill.

Poets of doodledom! true and sweet,
What sensitive plants ye are,
Ready to faint at a cry from Crete,
Or Borioboola-Gha!
Ye have rhymed the slave from his happy cave
And bloodhound in the swamp;
Give us a stave for the maiden slave,
With the black wolf's bite, and her living grave
In the den of the dismal scamp.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

THE OLD RIFLEMAN

Now bring me out my buckskin suit,
My pouch and powder, too ;
We'll see if seventy-six can shoot
As sixteen used to do !

Old Bess, we've kept our barrel bright,
' Our trigger quick and true,
As far, if not as fine a sight,
As long ago we drew !

And pick me out a trusty flint !
A real white and blue !
Perhaps 'twill win the other tint
Before the hunt is through !

Give boys your brass percussion caps,
Old "shut-pan" suits us well,
There's something in the spark ; perhaps
There's something in the smell !

We've seen the red-coat Briton bleed ;
The red-skin Indian, too ;
We've never thought to draw a bead
On Yankee-Doodle-Doo !

But Bessie ! bless your dear old heart !—
Those days are mostly done,
And now we must revive the art
Of shooting on the run.

If Doodle must be meddling, why
There's only this to do—
Select the dark spot in his eye
And let the daylight through !

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And if he doesn't like the way,
That Bess presents the view,
He'll maybe, change his mind, and stay
Where the good Doodles do!

THE BILLS

Oh! the bills, Christmas bills!
What a world of misery
Their memory instills!
As the merchants with their quills
Stuck behind their "ears polite,"
So caressingly invite
Your kind and prompt attention
To their bills!
How they dun, dun, dun,
As they kindly urge upon
Your earliest attention their blessed little
bills,
Little bills!

With a power of perforation,
And a maw that never fills,
What a sad dissimulation
To call them little bills!
While all the tin that tinkles
In your pocket only sprinkles
A little liquidation on the
Bills!

Oh! the destiny that fills
All our holidays with bills,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

When the very Christmas dinner
Of the poor indebted sinner
Might be cooked with the fuel of his bills!
Oh! the bills, bills, bills, bills!
Nothing else but bills!

December 20, 1854

THERE IS A TIME TO TRAVEL

—Solemn'un

It is a time for traveling!
The age of moving on!
We run, we ride, we roll, we slide,
We travel, everyone!
Some are tired of sitting still,
Some are fond of motion,
Some are ordered to the Springs,
Others to the Ocean.
Some to see the sun's eclipse,
Some to see the moon's,
Some a-sailing in the ships,
And some in the balloons!
This is on a "breach of trust,"
That is his pursuer!
She is on her bridal bu'st
And he is close up to her!
Some to find a starting place,
Some a place to settle,
Some to find the slippery face
Of Popocatpetl!
It is time of traveling,
And soon the time will come
When all the world will go to see
A man that stays at home.

MOVING ON

I met a weary mover-man
Half gone upon his journey,
And thought that, minus caravan,
He might have served, so lank and wan,
He might have served, that mover-man,
As sign to an attorney.

The land was poor he left behind;
The land was poor before him;
And wherefore move and wherefore not
Were puzzle more than any plot
To him, the daddy that begot,
And her, the dame that bore him.

Move on! move on! She's just ahead,
Old Fortune with her finger!
Happy the mover-man who gets
To—where the sun goes when he sets,
And comes from where he rises.

February, 1860

YE MOVER

White, the winding roadway shines,
Scantily shadowed by ye pines,
Where ye Mover moveth slow,
Wearily and Westward, ho!

Ark of his before the wind,
With its jolly-boat behind!
Yaller-dog, that fares at one
With his wife and rifle-gun!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And ye row of little eyes
Graded to an easy rise,
With, by whiles, a level where
Twins alleviate ye stair.

Down the dale and up the hill
So the Mover moveth still,
He and all his household band
Bound to seek the promised land.

Scarce the girdled pines are dead
On the hills he harvested ;
Scarce the blessed sunlight blinks
Through his cabin's wasted chinks

Ere a vision, vague and dim,
Hints a "better place" for him ;
Deeper soil and softer sun,
Somewhere else, and farther on !

Where the woods supply his wants ;
Where 'tis "dangerous to plant !"
Where ye cattle range at will,
And ye roads run, all, down hill
To market, meeting house and mill.

Where, with scarce a tax, the State
Grows, in all *good* grandeur, great,
Where but bad folks fear the laws,
And none but "Browns" are Governors.

So ye Mover cocks his eye,
Curves his spine and smites his thigh,
While the hope his heart approves
Comes to move him and he *moves*.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

So ye Mover moveth still
Up ye dale and down ye hill,
Leaving but this sad surmise,
"Where he moves to when he dies?"

Where ye righteous rest, we know,
Also where ye wicked go!
But what happy place may be
Ye "Mover's" is a mystery!

How were mortal mover blest
In world without a West!
Who, with half a hemisphere,
Weeps a wilderness to clear!

Speed we then the Mover man
In his moving while he can—
Blest if not a hope as dim
Moveth us as moveth him.

February, 1860

NEPHEW TOM AT A CRISIS

I know no use in life,
Dear Tom, for a "cotton" wife!

A bundle of burrs in lint!
Weak enough, on a hint,
To break your heart or—the mint!

A wonder of paint and paste!—
A wasp in worse than waist!—
Of a temper and special taste

That never were nurtured far
From the soul of a pickle-jar!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Ready to faint and die,
Tumbling over a-pale,
If "Marigold" moves an eye,
Or "Moss-Rose" tosses her tail;
A petulant four o'clock,
Perishing at five!
Lord, keep us under a lock
From wedding the like
When we wive!

Yield us a maiden sweet,
Ye meadows of paradise—
With your lilies about her feet,
And your violets in her eyes!
Whose brow is the mirrored calm
Of her clear soul's starry fire;
Whose breath is the very balm
Of the honey-bird's desire!

Not of the blooms that close
Ere the summer is over-past—
But a beautiful star that grows
More beautiful till the last.

And the pearlhood of girlhood lies
In her purity and truth;—
Ah! Tom, might we harvest the prize,
We could glean all our summers with Ruth.

SONG OF THE SINGLE GENTLEMEN

To the Tribe

Brothers! let us all remember
Where we used to go,
In the long nights of November
Long time ago!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Boots of midnight's blackest brightness,
Kids that were like snow,
Pants that shamed the present tightness
Long time ago!

All the world was wide before us
Where we chose to go;
All the damsels did adore us
Long time ago!
Sweet at soirees to behold 'em
All in a row;
Oh, what precious things we told 'em
Long time ago!

Where are all the shapes so slender,
Lips that trembled so,
Eyes so bright, and souls so tender,
Long time ago?
Some were to the churchyard carried
Where the violets blow;
Some are fat! and all were married
Long time ago!

On the steep highway to Hades
Down the hill we go!
Where immortal maiden ladies
Lead their apes, you know!
Sadly there we will remember
How we used to go,
In the long nights of November
Long time ago!

October 23, 1858

SONGS OF HOME



SONGS OF HOME

HOME

Forest-girded, cedar-scented,
Veiled like Vespers, sweet and dim;
Pure as burned the Temple's glory,
Shadowed by the Seraphim;
Islet from contending oceans,
Coral-cinctured, crowned with palm,
Where the wrestling world's commotions
Melt through music into calm;
Throats that sing and wings that flutter
Softly 'mid the balm and bloom;
Sweeter songs than lip can utter
Sings my heart for thee,
My home.

Bless that dear old Anglo-Saxon,
For the sounds he formed so well;
Little words, the nectar-waxen
Harvest of a honey-cell,
Sealing all a summer's sweetness
In a single syllable!
For, of all his quaint word-building,
The queen-cell of all the comb
Is that grand old Saxon mouthful
Dear old Saxon heartfelt,
Home.

December 1, 1859

TICKNOR'S POEMS

AN APRIL MORNING IN GEORGIA

A deeper azure where the clouds are flying
 Along the upper sky,
A softer shadow where the leaves are lying
 Our forest pathway by,
A sweeter murmur in the south winds sighing,
 Tell us the spring is nigh.

The bluebird flits, and coos the ring-dove tender
 Amid the young green leaves;
Mansions of mist and silver, white and slender,
 The shy wood-spider weaves;
Swingeth the swallow to his old home under
 The unforgotten eaves.

Its bridal wreathes, with starry gems of yellow,
 The jasmine's stores unfold,
Adown the tresses of the trembling willow
 Dropping its bells of gold;
Fit tracery to deck the perfumed pillow,
 Where Love's young dreams are told.

A thousand forms, like frolic children hiding,
 Challenge the laughing showers,
Watching the flight of pearly clouds and chiding
 The treasure-laden hours;
A thousand forms of untold beauty biding
 Amid the unborn flowers.

A thousand forms, and not in nature only,
 The warm spring showers unfold,
Another mission, pure and calm and holy,
 The voice of spring has told,
Waking some joy in souls long sad and lonely,
 Some hope in hearts long cold.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Some light from sunlight may our sadness borrow,
Some strength from bright young wings,
Some hope from brightening seasons, when each
morrow
A lovelier verdure brings;
Some softened shadow of remembered sorrow
From the calm depths of springs.

Blend thy blest visions with the sleep that cumber
The dull, cold earth so long;
Bring bloom and fragrance to the flowret's slumbers,
And bid our hearts be strong;
Breathe thine own music through our spirit's
numbers,
Season of light and song.

January 20, 1855

A NOSEGAY

To a Lady at a Distance

I send our youngest rosebud; and
'Twill wither ere it kiss thy hand.

Also, from our cedar tree,
A plume to outlive chivalry!

So love has knit in one small nest,
The toughest and the tenderest!

INTO THE SHADOWS

(We have lived so far beyond the flight of summer friends, and have had so frequently to say "farewell" to others of a finer description, that the memory of many of them has finally arranged itself to the rhythm of chariot wheels.

To some of these the following lines may prove significant.)

Into the evening shadows,
Ever we see them pass,
Steeds with their stately steppings,
Wheels as of rippling glass;

Over the sand and pebbles—
Over the stones and clay,
Fitfully lit and darkened,
Vanishing with the day.

They to the sempiternal
Sunshine without a pain;
We, as though the eternal
Shadows had closed again;

For their eyes were the fondest, clearest,
That ever our souls drew near,
And their voices the sweetest, dearest,
That ever our souls shall hear.

Dark is the house, my brother,
Where the shadow of parting falls,
And only the eyes of our memories
Follow us round the walls.

Dark is our lot, my brother—
Sad as this planet bears—

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Should our lip deny to another
The light it hath learned at theirs,

If, after the day is over,
And the shadow of evening steals,
No eye through its mists shall follow
The flight of our chariot wheels.

TORCH HILL,
October 29, 1868

"DO THEY MISS ME AT HOME?"

"The world is not all so dark
But a smile can make it sweet."
—TENNYSON.

A question that betrays
The answer ere it come,
For that "I miss" conveys
That I *am* missed at home.

For so the world is full
Of call that answers call,
Along the wires that pull
Both ways or not at all.

A SONG FOR THE ASKING

To Rosalie Nelson Ticknor

A song! What songs have died
Upon the earth,
Lyrics of Love and Pride—
Of Tears and Mirth?

Fading as hearts forget,
As shadows flee!
So vain the voice of song,
And yet
I sing to thee!

A song! The ocean shell
Should murmur long
Might thy soft touch impel
Its soul to song!
A song? Then near my heart
Thy cheek must be,
For, like the shell, it sings—
Sweet Heart—
To Thee, *of* Thee!

1855

OUR BOBBY—ASLEEP

Robert Carter

The cows have come home from the cotton-field
pasture,
The colts are at rest, and the calves are all dumb,
Aunt Rosey has given the apple he asked for,
And Bobby's asleep as sound as a drum!

From the earliest neigh of Dan Phoebus his courser,
Till the last weary team from its yoke was un-
loosed
He's run with the wagon and ridden the horses,
And now he has gone with the chickens to roost!

And sweet be the dreams of his manly young spirit,
When beautiful sleep on his eyelids shall rest,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Till the hands that have wrought for the bliss they
inherit
Shall be folded for aye, on an innocent breast!

No poet may scribble his deeds into story!
No column arise with the sound of his name,
But the works of his hands shall be better than glory
And the worth of his heart shall be brighter than
fame.

1858

"GELERT"

'Twas not for special beauty,
Though beautiful was he,
Nor yet in reverent honor
Of a stainless pedigree,
That reached across the ocean,
Through twice a century.

But for love that ever listened
To affection's lightest breath,
For a faithfulness that glistened
In the very haze of death,
That our cedars droop their shadows,
And our jasmines twine a wreath.

Under the great Deodar
There lies a little mound—
As beneath some proud pagoda
A prince might slumber sound,
In the verdure and the odor
Of consecrated ground—
And a hand hath written "Gelert"
In honor of a hound.

"IN MAMRE"

Do you ever think when your Eden tree
Is flourishing wide and green,
With friendships thicker than fruits of gold,
And love with its flowers between—
How many beautiful souls may be
That your soul hath never seen?
And how much "loving" your heart could hold
In apples of silver, and blossoms of gold,
Were your heart an evergreen?

In a world so wide there are nooks to hide,
And shadows to veil the sweet;
And there are the wise with unseeing eyes,
And the swift with unheeding feet.
Happier we, were our Eden tree
A tent in the desert's heat,
Who hold that the very angel who spoke
To Abraham, under the Mamre oak,
May be the next we meet!

'Tis a pleasant thought when the eventide,
In glory, looks down on our prayers,
That we have not mocked in the day of our pride
The meanest pilgrim whose dust may hide
An "angel unawares"!
And a beautiful hope, as the night unrolls
Her raiment of rest serene,
That we are nearer the beautiful souls
That our souls have never seen.

THE PEDDLER MAN AT TORCH HILL

Poets and peddlers! From the early day
Till now the night of "letters" closes blind,
Peddlers and poets on the king's highway
Have met with salutations quaint though kind.

Who walks with Wordsworth, or with Shakespeare's
wings,
Winnows the gold from this world's dusty cares,
May glean a grace from life's most common things,
And entertain an angel unawares.

In thoughts like these my inner man rejoiced,
As nightfall dropped a peddler at the gate,
A huge "bed-tick" upon his shoulder hoist,
A thousand pounds—in size, if not in weight.

The house-dog silenced, from the gate I heard
The olden plaint of all the world's highways:
"Footsore and hungry!" though, I wis, no word
Of retrospective hint at "better days"!

"A plague on peddlers!" is the form of wish
With which one's peddler welcome should begin;
Which, as a poet, I condensed to "Pish!"
And bade the biped dromedary in.

And in he came; at every step a bow
That offered me the mattress on his back,
As one by duty doubly bent—to show
His weight of obligation and of pack.

Much talk, but none that I might understand;
Of plaintive demonstration, also, much!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

I only gathered that his Faderland
Was farther off—Jerusalem or Dutch!

Some arrant knight of commerce, who hath strayed
To these poor parts, by cheating fancy led,
To drive a brief but profitable trade
In lies and linen tapes, thieving and thread;

In drill-eyed sharps, no sharper than himself,
Tho' dull his eye and all adust his skin;
To plunder pity of her slender pelf,
And thrive in chief when chiefly "taken in."

His supper done, I him to bed allowed;
But soon thereafter, passing unawares,
I saw (and beg your pardon if I bowed
And said "Amen") the peddler at his prayers!

I do not deem all peddlers are devout;
I do not argue that they all are Dutch;
I only urge the pressure of the doubt
To hold in reasonable honor such.

TORCH HILL,
November 16, 1859

GROUP OF DUCKLINGS

Ducklings, six of the downiest
That a duck could hatch if she did her best,
Or a painter paint at his creamiest.

Of the richest and roliest-poliest;
First choice Frank's! and the present quest
Of Frank's forefinger "the prettiest!"

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Round and round, as a hawk that eyes
Ducklings, six of the dumpling size;
Each so suitable—still she flies.

Ducklings, six, and one for dinner;
But which? so hovers the dainty sinner,
Nor fills the hollow that acheth in her.

"This is the prettiest—brownie-white!
Except this yellow one on the right—
I mean the left—with a fly in sight.

"The one that scampers! The one that's still!
The one afloat, with dripping bill.
Prettiest, washed and had his fill!
But hungry top-knot's prettier still!

"This one! after the bug. The other,
Watching at once the bug and his brother!
Which *is* the prettiest? *ask their mother!*"

Puzzled Frank! I know a nest,
And a mother too of the wisest, best,
Who could not tell, and who would not test,
For the wide world at its happiest,
Which of her darlings she loves the best.

1869

THE GRAY GOING HOME

To the old War Horse

Up the hill, mine honored Gray!
We are going home—"to stay!"

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Around the hill, below the heights,
Cling the glooms and gleam the lights.

Glamour of the evil eyes!
Spume of hate that never dies!

Let the cauldron boil below!
Wish the world a fairer foe!

Balsam to our battle-scars
Climbing nearer to the stars.

Homeward with the rapture that
Beached the ark on Ararat.

All the ways of war and weather
We have worn the harness leather.

Days with never cymbal-beat,
Save the music of thy feet.

Nights with never star or guide,
Save the glimmer of thy hide.

Stained with all the tints of toil
And "variations of the soil,"

Deeper tinct with every stain
The tireless wine-press wrings from pain,

Not the frosted hills display
Richer dapple, oh, my Gray!

Not the vales at vintage hold
Riper deeps of gloom and gold.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Up the hill, oh, grace and speed,
And power unplummeted of need!

These have cheered the night agone,
These are musical at dawn.

Ringling to the bright'ning dome,
Climbing upwards, onwards, *home!*

Far above the cauldron's spume,
With starry cross and stainless plume,

We have shared the "corn" and heather,
We are going *home* together.

On thy crest this loving sign,
Be my Lord's white mark on mine!

"WHIP-POOR-WILL"

Whip Poor Will! Was there ever heard
Such a blood-thirsty, slanderous, scandalous
bird!

Under the window so slyly to creep,
And whistle "come whip him" while Will's
asleep.

It's a bird of darkness, and not of day,
That whistles a hint that he dare not say.

Whip Poor Will! Why, what has he done?
Has he found your eggs, ma'am, and broken
one?

Has he torn his jacket, or fought at play,
Or missed his lesson, or run away,

Or broken a tumbler, or scratched the chairs,
Or choked at table, or spoken at prayers?

No, Willie's a boy that's nice and neat,
And Willie's a boy that's bright and sweet;
He's quiet at home and he's quick at school,
And he never breaks, if he knows, the rule;
And I really think it were wondrous silly
For nothing at all to whip poor Willie!

But, Whip-poor-will, if you've really seen
Another Willie that's bad and mean,
And you think you ought, and think 'twill "pay,"
To whip poor Willie, why whip away.
And so good-by to your birdship till
There's more occasion to whip *our* Will!

1869

"MOTHER'S WORK"

Darning stockings
For restless feet,
Scrubbing faces
To lily-sweet!
Teaching Bible
And catechism,
Soothing bruises
And healing schism.
Smooth and smoother,
Linger nor jerk;
That's our Mother—
The woman's work!

Raising roses,
Burying smarts,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Hiving sunshine
Under our hearts!
Bravest spirit
Beneath the dome!
Dastards falter
When *she* says "Come!"
Smooth and smoother,
"Nor haste nor rest!"
Beautiful Mother,
Whom God hath blest.

Tender, most tender!
Child, take heed!
Rare her splendor
Of thought and deed.
Mild as moonlight
In softest quiver,
To shine with the stars
Forever and ever!
Smooth and smoother—
When life hath flown—
The wings of "Mother"
Still woo our own.

IDYL

To Maria Nelson Ticknor

I

A vision which I had of late,
By the orchard's lattice gate,
Let this simple song relate!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Vision of a little girl,
With a cheek of peach and pearl,
And the promise of a curl!

Daintily in white arrayed,
Borne by Ethiopian maid,
Blending well with light and shade.

Dimpled hand on dusky neck,
Ebony with silver fleck,
'Twixt a turban and a check!

By the cedar's scented gloom,
By the violet's perfume,
By the jasmine's golden bloom,

By the graceful hawthorn tree,
By the stately hickory,
Pausing for a kiss from me!

Melting where the sunlight shines,
On the blossomed nectarines,
Melting down the orchard lines.

II

Melts, but bids before me rise
A wiser pair of wider eyes,
In a wide world of surprise,

And a world of rapture swells
In her accent as she tells
All the legends of our dells.

Where the wild bee builds her cells,
Where the humming-birdie dwells,
Where the squirrel drops the shells!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Voice, by soul of music stirred,
Eloquent in tone and word,
Mocks the very mocking-bird.

And she knows the way of fruit,
All the tricks of bud and shoot,
All the secrets of the root.

Much that wiser folk call weeds
Her wide horticulture heeds;
Boundless her delight in seeds.

Leave her to her slender hoe,
Let the seasons come and go,
Let the flowers and maiden grow.

III

Another Presence! bright, yet pure,
With mien more modest than demure.
Not our little maiden, sure?

Yes! by dimpled cheek and chin,
Violet eyes, and velvet skin,
'Tis our "Summer-child" again!

'Mid the roses she hath wrought—
'Mid the lilies till she caught
Health and grace in form and thought.

Greet her, all ye clustered blooms!
Apples, peaches, pears, and plums,
Greet your sweetest as she comes!

By the cedar's scented breath,
By the violets underneath,
By the jasmine's golden wreath.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Crown her with your fragrant hands,
All bright things from all bright lands,
Crown your brightest, where she stands,

By the graceful hawthorn tree,
By the stately hickory,
Pausing for a kiss from me.

TORCH HILL,
April 15, 1858

TWILIGHT ON TORCH HILL

It is eve at our eyrie; the river
Falls dim in its tremulous gaze;
There's a mantle of mist and a quiver
Of stars through the violet haze.

Soft twilight! the far silent city
Sleeps, veiled in the valley beneath,
Eclipsed by the flash of this pretty
Bright "ruby-throat" here on this wreath.

Shall I try, ere the daylight is over,
So high from its dust and its din,
How much of the world I can cover
With the leaf of a jessamine?

All the life and the light of the city
Shall I daintily hide from my sight,
With its sorrow that weeps, and the pity
That walks with the angels to-night?

Sweet mercies that shadow me! Never!
Lest the soul in my body should die,
Ere the sparkle fades out of the river,
Or the light from the violet sky.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

AMONG THE BIRDS

We built a nest among the birds
Now many Mays ago;
And we have heard a many a word
They sang, by building so.

And times when dew is on the day,
And starlight on the trees,
We meet and warn the mists away
With little lays like these:

A birdie tells of dimpled dells
That blushed in far-off springs;
And many an April blooms and thrills
With rapture while she sings.

A birdie coos of light and shade
The summers brought our nest,
Of Violets born, and Lilies laid
Where Lilies love to rest.

A birdie carols: Day's decline
Restores the dawn's caress;
And Autumn pours a richer wine
Than April's tenderness.

A birdie says: The bitter days
May blow till they expire;
The winds but raise our censer blaze
And waft its incense higher!

The birdies sing: The bright shells bring
The soul-song of the sea;
The close cheek and the clasping hand
Make Life's whole melody.

TORCH HILL, *May*, 1870

THE ECHO STORY

This is a rhyme that our poet writ,
Sitting at peace one day,
With his warring done, and his rifle-gun
Bracketed away.

A little lad in the curly grace
Of summers that numbered three,
With a wrathful trace on his rosy face,
Stood at his mother's knee.

"Mother, get me a rifle-gun,
With a bayonet keen and bright;
There's a fellow that hides in the hills in front,
And him I am bound to fight!

"A fellow that hoots like a hooting owl,
And mocks like a mocking-bird;
A rascal that calls me the meanest names
That ever a fellow heard.

"Now, mother, get me a rifle-gun,
And a jacket of blue or gray,
And I think you'll hear of the prettiest fight,
Or the funniest run-away!"

And the mother, parting the sunny curls,
Smiled in the earnest eyes:

"I know the lad; he of Johnny's age,
And just about Johnny's size.

"He'll never run from your rifle-gun;
We'll try him another way.
Speak lovingly to that lad, my son,
And hear what he has to say."

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Soon, in the porch that faced the hills,
They stood in the waning light,
A voice replied to the voice that cried,
"Johnny, my dear, good-night!"

And Johnny's smile, as he turned away,
Was audible, sweet and clear;
And it was a rather good thing to say,
And a very good thing to hear.

And I hope the world as it grows in grace
Will learn how a war is won;
That Love is still the invincible—
And bracket its rifle-gun.

TORCH HILL,
October 29, 1868

THE HILLS

Below the granite chain
Appalachian,
Above the sandy plain,
Which under-dips the main,
There lies a belt of hills,
Which the Middle Georgian tills.

The hills! and how came they?
The yellow, red, and gray?
The gravel, sand, and clay?
The big ones, why so tall?
The little ones so small?
How came they here at all?
Is the mystery that fills
The history of the hills,
With much perplexity
For my geology.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Whether deposited
In the deep ocean's bed,
As one might softly spread
An ancient feather-bed
Over an earthquake's head.
Till waking with a shout,
The giant laid about,
And made a hill "crop out"
For every deadly blow
Delivered down below.

Or whether 'twas the gift
(A most prodigious lift!)
Of the era known as "drift,"
When the ice-raft stole away
The gravel, sand, and clay
From many an Arctic bay,
And "boulder," by the way,
Bore southward day by day
Till on the floor it lay—

On the grooved and furrowed floor
Of the slow-receding sea—
And, cracking with a roar,
Poured mud from every pore,
To make one hillock more,

Which the slow-receding sea,
With its softly-lapping hands
Amid the moistened sands,

Like a man that undertakes
To mould before he bakes,

Or a child that patti-cakes—
Which the slow receding sea,
With its softly-dimpled hands,
With its foam-white ruffled hands,
With its diamonded hands,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Bequeathed as "Cotton-lands"
To all the world—to me,
And my Geology
A much perplexi——T.

II

"The hills, and how came they?"
We pondered yesterday;
As one who rhymes his way
Through the mystery that fills
The history of hills—
The everlasting hills—
With an everlasting doubt
As to how they came about.

To a metre not more slow,
To a measure that must flow
To the echo of a woe,
We rhyme again to show
The hills, and where they go.
Their coming none may know,
Nor question where they go!

Oh, brothers! shall the land
Which our loving Father planned
For the honest heart and hand—
The hills our Father planned,
And with softest seasons spanned,
Which He gathered from the sea,
And gave to you and me—
Hear the echo of the woe,
"The hills! and here they go
To the ocean, whence they sprung,
Bewept, and not unsung!"

TICKNOR'S POEMS

My brothers, answer No!
The hills! we love the hills,
Their heads are nearest Heaven,
Their sides to morn and even!
 There is a joy that fills
 Their anthem to the day;
 There is a peace that fills
 The requiem of hills
 To the light that dies away.
'Tis more than song or wine
To see their summits shine,
Through twilight's purple wine,
 Like islands of the blest,
 In the ocean of their rest;
When the broad palm of the sun,
With his signet-star thereon,
Is raised in benison,
 "Hold fast the hills below!
 Your hills and homes, and so
 Until the dark be light,
 God bless you, and good-night!"

TORCH HILL,
February 16, 1860

PLANT FRUIT AND FLOWERS

Plant flowers! yea, flowers! What care or cost
 Shall the generous hand deny,
These sinless symbols of all we've lost,
 And all we seek on high!
Flowers to carry the breath of spring
 To windows and walks and eaves;
Flowers! what sorrow in heart or wing
 But shelters among their leaves!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Plant fruit ; yea, fruit ! in no niggard hole
To rival the slug-worm's toil ;
But wide as the Patriot's unbought soul,
And deep in the cream of soil !
Fruit, to temper the Winter's ruth,
To soften the Summer's rage ;
Fruit ! to brighten the morn of Youth,
And mellow the eve of Age.

Plant fruit and flowers ; yea, flowers and fruit !
The boughs may be bare and cold,
But a subtle alchemyst at the root
Is turning thy toil to gold,
Who follows thy foot-prints silently,
Nor sleeps when thy labors close,
Until the wilderness "glad for thee,"
Is "blossoming like the rose !"

February 8, 1858

THE FARMER MAN

To William N. Nelson

FYTTE I

The farmer man ! I see him sit
In his low porch, to muse a bit
The while I throw him in a—fytte.

What time the jasmines scent the air,
And drop their blossoms in his hair ;

What time the evening echo tells
Of trampling herds and tinkling bells ;

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And all the echoes of the Ark
Salute the planter-patriarch!

So sitting with his collar spread,
And heels ylevelled with his head;

A monarch in his mere content,
A king by general consent.

FYTTE II

And framed between his heels he sees
A picture, which perchance may please:

The distant city, and more nigh
The river's twinkle, like an eye

Obscured at intervals by motes,
Which quite extract its beam with boats.

The purple hills where, swift or slow,
The cloudland shadows come and go;

While, dun as dormice, in their train
The little rail cars pant in vain,

With all the clatter that portends
The most prodigious dividends!

For oh! the wilderness that lies
Between the worlds of sound and size!

And oh! the leagues that sunder yet
The realms of dividend and debt!

And then the vassal valleys bring
Their tribute to the railway king;

TICKNOR'S POEMS

The which he pockets with a roar
Expressive of a wish for "more!"

Then with a yell through yon deep cut
He dives, and — peace to Lilliput!

The cottages with curling smoke,
Significant of "colored folk,"

The first without a foe or care,
To breathe Millennium's morning air.

And in their midst a lonely mound
Most eloquent, without a sound,

Tells how the parting years have sped
With the black savage and the red.

The yellow cornfields and the brown,
Where Southern snows have melted down,

And borne its all-abundant lint
To drown the mills and drain the mint.

The woods whose autumn glories cheer
The solemn sunset of the year,

With oval openings, which enring
Such views as we are picturing,

And hint how much the traveler sees
Who stays at home and studies trees,

And thanks the telescope, tho' dim,
That keeps its smallest eye on him,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And nearer home all shape and sheen
Of Nature's endless evergreen,

Through which a winding walk doth glide
To orchards, jubilant and wide,

Restrained within an emerald edge,
Of fair, tho' somewhat thorny hedge,

An archway entrance, and o'erhead
This little legend to be read :

"Partake of all the fruit, nor grieve
For Eden's morn or Eden's Eve!"

FYTTE III

But what of him, the farmer man,
His way of life and being's plan?

Why, simply (be it so with many!)
That "Now's as good a time as any."

Yet he can tell you of a morn
Ere yonder valley sang with corn,

Or yonder hill-top bared its brow,
Submissive to the sun and plow.

And long before yon proud white spires
Crushed out the low red council fires.

With not a "turn out" toe to press
The dim walks of the wilderness.

Of many a season come and flown,
With strokes of fortune and his own;

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Till waves of varied memory
Shall leave him stranded as we see;

With time's old foam-marks in the lines,
Now starry with the jessamines.

FYTTE IV

His politics I might rehearse
In limits lesser than my verse.

Should any fool my State invade,
Then mention me as strict "State aid,"

Till then I mind my own affairs,
And trust my friends to manage theirs.

His science? such as thou may'st hit
By plowing deep in search of it.

His wit? the shortest link that girds
A Saxon thought to Saxon words.

His credit? shall the world forget
The Atlas who upheld her debt?

His creed? in reverence of the "past"
Old faith and feeling holds he fast.

And so my muse's stenograph
Anticipates his epitaph—

"He read the papers, loved his wife,
And hated humbug all his life."

And, happily, to round my "pome,"
"Loved God, his neighbor, and his home."

December, 1858

TICKNOR'S POEMS

BUMBLEBY

The Union and the negro questions.

I

This is the legend of what befell
Farmer Bumbleby—down a well!

II

Farmer Bumbleby! one of those—
Broad of shoulders and square of toes—

That never lose, of their lives, a day
Nor know of a debt that they cannot pay.

With a hundred arms and an eye that scanned
Every finger of every hand.

Briareus—Argus! born to keep
A bank account with his bees and sheep.

One of that natural order, which
Ripens at forty and ripens—"rich!"

Richly! Rosily! ripened he
That busiest, burliest Bumbleby.

III

Farmer Bumbleby digged a w—ait!
Mutton! we won't anticipate.

Farmer Bumbleby owned a *Ram*,
Black as Egypt! a son of "Ham";

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Sire (such was his lord's delight),
To flocks with never a fleck of—white,

Name of Legion! and *now* it fell
That Farmer Bumbleby digged his well!

IV

Forty feet from the surface, sheer
To gravel, tokening water near.

(A picket paling that rambled nigh
Veiled the pit from a careless eye,

Not too high for the running leap
Of an average fool of a frightened sheep!)

V

Something wrong with the well inside!
“Curse the curb!”—but it didn't slide.

“Master's hand is the oil,” said he;
Down he went like a—Bumblebee,

Down it went with a rumble; when—
What did enter those black-sheep then?

VI

Ham, and the whole of his colored kin,
Seized at once by the sire of sin!

First a frolic and then a flight;
Diabolical—headlong—right

TICKNOR'S POEMS

For the little picket established nigh
The quarters of Farmer Bumbleby!

VII

Front the lightning! and if you will,
Hurl Niagara up the hill!

Cross the hurricane's path! but keep
Your chivalry clear of a charge of sheep.

VIII

Here they come with a stamp and stare!
Over the fence with a foot to spare!

Woolly cataract! first the sire,
Then the progeny, high and higher!

Mutton-Bedlam! and every sheep
Mad for the highest and lowest leap!

Over the wall with a demivolt,
Down the well like a catapult!

Endless? nay! for the hole is full
Up to the windlass, a well of Wool!

IX

'Twas August! the first went down at day!
The last came up when the skies were gray!

'Twas night when Bumbleby reached the air,
A picture! Paint him? I might despair,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

But Black, the color is close and cheap,
And there's his likeness upon a sheep!

Deftly done! but a bolder sleight
That Artist's that ever un-paints him white!

X

Enough! may never your wit expel
Such a sick man from such a well!

We laid him out on the grass to cool
And he fainted—whispering “D—n all wool!”

He lived, but dwindled, that stricken man
From fat and rosy to gaunt and wan!

XI

A double horror oppressed his soul—
A mutton mountain in that black hole!

No rest his days and his nights no sleep,
Ever his morning—and—night-mare, Sheep!

All wool became, and we banished it,
Another name for “another fit!”

XII

At last we saw in his waning eye
That the man must change or the man must
die;

We called the Doctor; he came in cloth,
And ordered, mortally, “Mutton-broth!”

XIII

Have you an uncle, whose name is Sam?
Has your uncle a pet black Ram?

Kind it were of his kin to tell
Your uncle of Bumbleby and his well.

1858

FREE TRADE FOR THE FARMER-MAN

A farmer-man (elect of those)
Who pays his way and as he goes
Evolves the best from what he knows;

Who, with the soil, the sun, the rain,
Blends sweat of brow and thought of brain,
To bring the harvest round again;

Who seeks not melons on his trees,
Nor looks for butter to his bees,
Nor asks the help of Hercules;

Mayhap, beside his firelight,
May read the rhyme that here I write,
And find the reason fit him quite.

A farmer, let his eye command
The course of trade from hand to hand
That bore his last crop from the land;

Across the far off, rolling seas
To rattling mills that rival these
In roar and much machineries;

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Till there, by growing strong and vast—
And thence, by spreading far and fast,
Its web enwrap'd the world at last.

As though the little "pod" might hold
A nation's welfare manifold,
A kingdom's coffered peace and gold;

And stretching out from zone to zone,
And blent with empires blood and bone,
Outweigh the scepter, crown and throne!

Well sped! a blessing on its flight,
If so beneath its pinions white
It bears the message "Peace and Light!"

Well sped! a blessing on its way!
'Twas work for work, 'twas worth for pay,
So prosper I, and prosper they!

But let the farmer, thoughtful eyed,
Survey the still returning tide,
For *his* on the water's wide!

And like the fisherman that got
A giant in a small quart pot,
Behold the giant that is—not!

From yonder where the spindle hums
Mid gliding bands and whirling drums,
One giant dwindles as he comes.

The farmer's pay! perplexed with cost,
And taxed from pillow unto post,
Of all the profits dwindles most.

How knows he that the plow he sent
Throat deep in its brown element
Was "taxed" at all, or what per cent.?

His iron taxed to rottenness—
His liquors till their "brands" express
A "poison" and a "nastiness!"

Rope, bagging, sugar, coffee, tea,
Hat, coat, shirt, boots and breeches, he
Pays tax on tax unendingly!

Nor dreams he of a tax allowed
To knit its greed within his shroud,
Though naked famine o'er it bowed,

That someone, in a far off land,
Might forge at ease the iron band
Which bows his back and binds his hand!

He only knows his crop is spent,
Nor "reckons" if the money went
To old Joe Brown or Government!

If at the time his crop he sold
One-third the price in yellow gold
And been purloined it would have told

Upon his pocket just the same;
For tariff, though it hides its shame
Is stealing by another name.

To Him, I'd ban his household bliss,
His children's love, and his wife's kiss,
Until he vows to think of this!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And this thing brings an arm of aid
Against the tariffs that invade
His peace, his purse, his toil, his trade.

TORCH HILL,
Seed Time, 1860

THE HORRORS OF HORTICULTURE

I've got me a nice little garden,
With a neat little palin' around,
And I growl, without axin' your pardon,
For I grumble on very good ground!

Ne'er a crack for the eye of a cricket,
Your critical eye, sir, can view,
Yet the chickens pitch over the picket,
And the little Bob rabbits pop through!

And oft when the sweat of your labor
Is sweetened with visions of fruits,
In comes the poor shoat of your neighbor,
And up comes the crop by the "roots."

In spite of your P's and your Q's too
You're T'sd with the trouble you've lost,
P'—eas killed by the sticking they're used to,
And Q-cumbers curled by the frost.

Bad luck to your Irish potatoes!
Not an eye whence a tear ye might draw,
Not a Murphy to whisper come "ate us,"
Responds from the depths of the straw.

Your melons are true melon-colics,
Not rosy and cosy and flush,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Green gourds in the place of your "waters,"
And pumpkins in place of your "mush."

I've got me a nice little garden,
A neat little palin' around,
I growl, and I don't ax your pardon,
For grumbling upon my own ground.

TORCH HILL,
May, 1860

POETA IN RURE

Now, doth it give the corn a start,
Or cause the cotton grow?
They mock the minstrel's idle art,
My neighbors of the hoe;
With rumble of the tumble cart,
And lyric of "Gee-Whoa!"

Their legends are of doughty teams,
Of oxen and of sheep;
I hear them driving in their dreams
And counting in their sleep.

And yet their wit is rich in speech,
The wisest, uninspired;
Their limbs unto the fiddle screech
Right rhythmically wired.

Within these fields of care and strife
A man may come, no doubt,
To be a poet, all his life,
And never find it out.

To dwell among his woolly flocks,
His herds of hoof and horn,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Less happy than the licensed "ox
That treadeth out the corn!"

To hold the sky in all its scope
As one great weather-sign,
To toil athwart the vineyard's slope
And never taste the wine!

The day must have its dinner-gong,
The nation must be fed,
Yet one will weary of a song
With one sole burden, bread.

And one must count his labor "naught,"
His harvest quite in vain,
Who reared no blossom when he wrought
With summer on the plain,
No garland of a golden thought
To glorify his grain.

"KING KORN"

Agricultural Editor of the *Register*: I hope the following hint to the planters may reach them through your department of the *Register*, and incline their hearts towards King Korn.

The old king sat in his barn, beneath
An old owl, nodding near,
On a throne of shucks, with a royal wreath
Of cob-web around his ear;
And he hummed this note in his husky throat,
Which I'm recording here.

Ho! many and great are the cares and weight
Which a king is bound to bear—

TICKNOR'S POEMS

I'm sick of state—I'll abdicate—
King Kotton can take the chair!
Out in the cold, another old
Weevil-bedeveled Lear!

Many a year have I ruled, and ne'er
Was there lack of meal or meat—
But the world is bare of "something to wear,"
And sick of something to eat!
Along the Ganges, the Gaudalete,
Nile, Amazon, everywhere—
The world's replete with something to eat,
And crazy for something to wear!
I'm weary of state—I'll abdicate—
King Kotton can take the chair!

The lad I nursed, 'till his buttons burst,
And he left me in his pride
Of ruffles, worst, that ever nursed .
Notions of—parricide!
I fed him last, and I fed him first,
The rogue!—or he'd ha' died!

Well! Let him govern! The people's will
Is wise—in its way—indeed!
The youth is wild, but I hope the child
Will manage to make his seed!
Many a fool is born to rule
A realm that he couldn't—feed.
'Twere wiser to stint on Cotton lint
Than starve upon Cotton seed!

The old king grinned till his wisdom teeth
Were visible at each ear,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And he smiled with a smile that shook the
wreath
Of cob-webs around his ear!
In short, so loud that I woke and vowed
To tell you about it here!

March, 1869

LAND AND LABOR

There's a cry in our South that I can't understand,
Of the dearness of Labor, the cheapness of Land;
I thought if the world had a vision of bliss
Since Eve (and Tom Moore!)"—"It was this—it
was this:"

Cheap Labor! Dear Land! Shall the dial go back
A cycle or so for the blessing we lack?
Shall the darkest of ages, their annals expand
With the cheapest of Toil and the dearest of Land?

Then your blood was so cheap that your Seignor's
repose
Could afford it in foot-baths, and bless' his old toes!
Let grumble who list, there's a rise in your kind,
Since your shackles went up, and your Seignor
declined.

Your labor too high! *who*, ever, was known
To utter that cry for a work of his own?
Too much for a darkey! *How* much for the hint?
He might be a "gold mine"—might I be the mint?

There's a law on the subject that holds like a vice—
Of all a man hath his labor is price;

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And there's only one "wage" you can fasten on man,
To have what he makes, and to make what he can.

To steal with New England, to beg with old Cork,
Let them fix the price of your land and your work;
But for bread, while you live, and for peace when
you die,
Keep your Land cheap as dirt, and your Labor sky-
high!

YE RHYME OF YE RUSTYC

The doom of those who indulge too freely in carnivorous enjoyments, to the neglect of the more natural and healthful fruits, vegetables and farinaceous grains, is quaintly set forth in the following stanzas, from our friend the Doctor. Tom Hood could scarcely have told the tale better. Let all lovers of hog (who generally consider fruit "unhealthy") read and tremble.—*Southern Cultivator*.

I met a fellow-countryman,
('Twas only yester-e'en)
By day or night, the sorriest sight
That I have ever seen !
As ribbed as is the ribbed sea-sand,
As "long and lank and lean."

His limbs were small, his knees were large,
His bony ankles, too ;—
The teeth I saw in either jaw,
Were very dark and few ;—
A daylight Jack-o'-Lanthorn, with
No lanthorn shining through.

The oldest crow that caws below
Recalls no sadder case—

TICKNOR'S POEMS

A pumpkin in complexion, and
A "pimple" for a face!
The Father of all scare-crows, and
The family disgrace.

"Oh! tell me, fellow-countryman,
What is it thou has done,
That thou dost go, the veriest show
Beneath this blessed sun!
Recite! rehearse! in prose or verse,
What *is* it thou hast done?"

Right courteously my countryman
Did roll his quid and eye,
The while he "hitched his trousers up"
To heighten his reply,
And thus did speak, his hollow cheek
Confirming his reply.

"'Twas *want of fruit*, when I was young!
(Thy righteous wrath restrain!)
They kept its flavor from my tongue,
Its fragrance from my brain!
My father's fault! I lived on salt!
And lo! this tale of pain!"

"Were there no apples in those days?
No plum-trees, I implore?"
"The 'old man' had an orchard—yes,
And rare the fruit it bore,
Still ripening, with reluctant squeal,
To pig-meat, evermore.

"'Twas bacon! bacon! all the year!
'Twas hog through cold and heat!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

'Twas bacon ! bacon, everywhere !
And every bit to eat !
I lived on salt ! My father's fault !
And be his memory meet !

"What draughts of fire, my pangs require !
What 'drench' shall drown my grief !
The grog-man gets my living, and
My liver, too ; in brief
The autumn brings me many a fall,
The summer no relief.

"And now I'm prematurely old !
My hair is dead and dry,
There's neither glow upon my cheek,
Nor gladness in my eye."
He ceased to speak, and down his cheek,
A tear drop rattled dry !

Farewell ! thou most unhappy man !
Let all thy warning heed !
Thy wasted youth ! thy sorrows !—sooth,
There's wisdom in thy creed !
And health to him in trunk and limb
Who plants an apple seed !

And goldenly upon his bough,
And gladly at his knee,
Each year shall bring a brighter spring,
And fairer fruit—for he
Who draws his sap from Nature's tap,
Shall flourish like a tree !

TORCH HILL, GA.,
March, 1858

TICKNOR'S POEMS

JUNIALUSKEE

A famous Southern Apple of Indian Origin

Where shall the red man rest at last, that the white
man shall not find him?

Where shall his wigwam smoke arise, nor draw his
"fate" behind him?

Where shall he plant an apple-seed that a pale-face
shall not gather

The golden fruit ere the downward root hath tapped
the Indian's father?

Under his spreading apple tree, to his sons and
daughters dusky,

With their heads bowed down to their travel-gear,
spoke Chieftain Junialuskee.

His sons and daughters are on their way, and Junia-
luskee follows.

And his apple tree? Why, Junialuskee sold it for
fifty dollars!

January, 1860

NANTAHALEE

A famous Apple

You've heard, I think, of the beautiful maid

Who fled from Love's caresses,

Till her beautiful toes were turned to roots,

And both her shoulders to beautiful shoots,

And her beautiful cheeks to beautiful fruits,

And to blossoming spray her tresses!

I've seen her, man! she's living yet

Up in a Cherokee valley!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

She's an apple tree ! and her name might be,
In the softly musical Cherokee,
 A long-drawn "Nantahalee !"
'Tis as sweet a word as you'll read or write ;
Not quite as fair as the thing, yet quite
Sufficient to start an old anchorite
Out of his ashes to bless and bite
 The beautiful "Nantahalee !"

TORCH HILL,
April 1, 1859

REMINISCENCES

On visiting the Eagle and Phoenix Mills at Columbus, Ga.

Childhood ! The Chattahoochee's banks,
My scene of summer playing ;
The first to cross on the first planks
 Of the first bridge-King's laying.

Wild woods ; wild waters ; wilder men ;
Beyond my pen's inditing ;
We wore the look of Donnybrook,
 Trading, carousing, fighting.

The sly deer, in his shady dell,
Slept, of a foe undreaming ;
And the hoarse torrent mingled well
 With the fierce eagle's screaming.

A lad, with lads of dusky skin
I shared each sylvan passion ;
Shot, fished, and snared the terrapin
 In the true Indian fashion.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

A youth, I felt the blow of doom
Our races rend apart;
In a loved mate borne mangled home,
A bullet through his heart.

Again, how strange and swift the change
From such a wild beginning;
Where the chained river sings in tune
To the tamed "Eagle's" spinning.

Oh! mighty power of human thought,
Through rapine, fire and slaughter
That such a wondrous work has wrought
In rocks and falling water!

The force to rend the continent,
Hurled headlong down its bed,
Halts for this severed filament
Of weightless, floating thread!

The demon of a world a-whirl,
With rattle, clash and whirl,
Held in leash of gossamer
And guided by a girl!

The Eagle's master took me through
Long halls and lofty story,
Until I knew how cotton grew
Perfect through Purgatory!

Through pangs of cauldron, rack and wheel,
Till one might safely rank it
With blushing Psyche's bridal veil,
Or her first baby's blanket!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And still the river's stately rhyme
Rang through the stalwart timbers,
The thunders of a mightier mill,
And woke a greater miracle ;
God's marvel that remembers !

WAR POEMS

WAR POEMS

THE MIDNIGHT CROSS

In Idyls

To the Women of the South—dearer for the midnight,
and clearer for the Cross—I consecrate these little poems,
through ONE whose virtues, illustrating her native Vir-
ginia and her adopted Georgia, exhibit a type of woman-
hood rare in any annals but the sacred.

DEDICATION

In steadfast Hope! God's Majesty,
What midnight triumph mars
That brings thy knee, Humanity,
To bend beneath His stars!

Clearer than Hope, the clarion creed
That sways the whole world prone,
This shadow is a King's, indeed,
These stars are all His own.

E. P. N. C.—A LILY OF THE VALLEY

Thy smile, sweet sister, on my lay,
Is as the stars, I ween,
That brightens o'er this brilliant's ray,
Which, else, no light had seen!
That kindles o'er some brooklet's way,
Where, else, no song had been!

If aught of summer worth it brings
In bloom or melodies,
'Tis little for the lyric wings
Thy radiance taught to rise,
But little for a bird that sings
So near his Paradise.

By Hope in many a broken home,
And by the tears that shed
The proudest splendor of the tomb
Above the humblest head,
This song but asks thy soul's perfume
To crown our quick and dead.

THE VIRGINIANS OF THE VALLEY

To William Norborne Nelson

The knightliest of the knightly race
That, since the days of old,
Have kept the lamp of chivalry
Alight in hearts of gold ;
The kindest of the kindly band
That, rarely hating ease,
Yet rode with Spotswood round the land,
And Raleigh round the seas.

Who climbed the blue Virginia hills
Against embattled foes,
And planted there, in valleys fair,
The lily and the rose ;
Whose fragrance lives in many lands,
Whose beauty stars the earth,
And lights the hearths of happy homes
With loveliness and worth.

We thought they slept!—the sons who kept
The names of noble sires,
And slumbered while the darkness crept
Around their vigil fires;
But, aye, the "Golden Horseshoe" Knights
Their old Dominion keep,
Whose foes have found enchanted ground,
But not a knight asleep!

LITTLE GIFFEN

Out of the focal and foremost fire,
Out of the hospital walls as dire,
Smitten of grape-shot and gangrene,
(Eighteenth battle, and he sixteen!)
Specter! such as you seldom see,
Little Giffen, of Tennessee!

"Take him and welcome!" the surgeons said:
Little the doctor can help the dead!
So we took him, and brought him where
The balm was sweet in the summer air;
And we laid him down on a wholesome bed—
Utter Lazarus, heel to head!

And we watched the war with abated breath,
Skeleton boy against skeleton death.
Months of torture, how many such?
Weary weeks of the stick and crutch;
And still a glint of the steel-blue eye
Told of a spirit that wouldn't die.

And didn't. Nay, more! in death's despite
The crippled skeleton learned to write.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

"Dear Mother," at first, of course ; and then
"Dear Captain," inquiring about the men.
Captain's answer : "Of eighty and five,
Giffen and I are left alive."

Word of gloom from the war, one day ;
Johnson pressed at the front, they say.
Little Giffen was up and away ;
A tear—his first—as he bade good-by,
Dimmed the glint of his steel-blue eye.
"I'll write, if spared !" There was news of the
fight ;
But none of Giffen. He did not write.

I sometime fancy that were I king
Of the princely knights of the Golden Ring,
With the song of the minstrel in mine ear,
And the tender legend that trembles here,
I'd give the best on his bended knee,
The whitest soul of my chivalry,
For "Little Giffen," of Tennessee.

WILLIAM NELSON CARTER

Soldier of the South at sixteen, of the cross at nineteen,
died at Key West, aged twenty-one.

Spoke from the stainless azure
Of immemorial veins,
"War for the Right is over,
Battle for bread remains."

And he carried his bright smile from us,
Our choral of bird and breeze,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

To the light of the tideless summers,
The song of the tropic seas.

So far—yet his soul's clear brightness
Drew nearer, and never cold;
Found speech in the sea-bloom's whiteness,
And kisses in fruits of gold.

And sweeter than day-spring's murmur
To the palm when the spice-wind stirs
Were the voices that sang from the summer,
"Your darling has won his spurs!"

And we sang to the voice of the summer,
With a smile that was glad to tears,
"If your sea or your sand yield honor,
Trust to the cavaliers!"

Sang! with the summer stooping
To shatter us, root and crest;
With the lightning to signal "drooping,"
And the thunder to crash "at rest."

Dumb! and the clouds close o'er us,
And the world reels blank and dim.
Blind! with our hands before us
Beseeching the mists for him.

Christ's soldier! Through all the shadows
One lily of light shall rise—
Not far! though it smiles from the meadows
And summers of Paradise.

TORCH HILL,
June 23, 1869

TICKNOR'S POEMS

LEE

This wondrous valley! hath it spells
And golden alchemies,
That so its chaliced splendor dwells
In these imperial eyes?

This man hath breathed all balms of light,
And quaffed all founts of grace,
Till Glory, on the mountain height,
Has met him face to face.

Ye kingly hills! ye dimpled dells!
Haunt of the eagle—dove,
Grant us your wine of woven spells
To grow like him we love.

OUR GREAT CAPTAIN

“Stonewall” Jackson

The shout of battle hath fled,
The flame of it fallen dim;
We are sick of the war, it is said,
Weary of tales so grim.
But to-night, and our Captain lies dead;
To-night, and we think of him.

Knight of the cloudless sun,
Ithuriel of the spear,
Whose touch was the foe undone,
Whose name was a nation's cheer;
Whose voice and Victory's one,
Vanished in silence here.

But the flash of a fusillade,
In the gloom that hath lifted never,
And our guide and our glory fade
In the Wilderness forever,
Till we follow his smile to the shade
Of the Tree, by the beautiful river.

In the shadows with no release
From the sorrows that haunt us grim,
Where our hopes at their fountain cease,
And the light of the Heaven is dim,
It is strength, it is hope, it is peace,
It is triumph to think of Him.

DEAD JACKSON

A chaplet ! as ye pause, ye brave,
Beside the broad Potomac's wave ;
A wreath ! above dead Jackson's grave !

Against a hundred thousand one
Whose dauntless manhood held alone
Virginia's threshold and his own !

Hath vengeance tarried ? Swifter, none,
Since midnight lightning flashed upon
The sword of God and Gideon !

Hath God forgotten ? Who hath led
Your legions to this narrow bed,
Whose very name recalls the dead !

A Jackson ! let your banners fly,
And forward with the battle cry
Of Jackson and of Liberty !

TICKNOR'S POEMS

ALBERT SIDNEY JOHNSTON

Shiloh

His soul to God! on a battle-psalm!
The soldier's plea to Heaven!
From the victor-wreath to the shining Palm:
From the battle's core to the central calm,
And Peace of God in Heaven.

Oh, Land! in your midnight of mistrust
The golden gates flew wide,
And the kingly soul of your wise and just
Passed in light from the house of dust
To the Home of the Glorified.

THE SWORD IN THE SEA

The billows plunge like steeds that bear
The knights with snow-white crests;
The sea-winds blare like bugles where
The Alabama rests.

Old glories from their splendor-mists
Salute with trump and hail
The sword that held the ocean lists
Against the world in mail.

And down from England's storied hills,
From lyric slopes of France,
The old bright wine of valor fills
The chalice of Romance.

For here was Glory's tourney-field,
The tilt-yard of the sea;

TICKNOR'S POEMS

The battle-path of kingly wrath,
And kinglier courtesy.

And down the deeps, in sunless heaps,
The gold, the gem, the pearl,
In one broad blaze of splendor belt
Great England like an earl.

And there they rest, the princeliest
Of earth's regalia gems,
The starlight of our Southern Cross,
The Sword of Raphael Semmes.

Like that great glaive that Arthur gave
In guerdon to the sea ;
"Excalibur," that sleeps below,
Until the great sea-bugles blow
The summons of the Free.

"GRACIE," OF ALABAMA

Incident related by General R. H. Chilton, who was nicknamed "Gracie."

On, sons of mighty stature,
And souls that match the best ;
When nations name their jewels
Let Alabama rest.

Gracie, of Alabama !
'Twas on that dreadful day
When howling hounds were fiercest,
With Petersburg at bay.

Gracie, of Alabama,
Walked down the lines with Lee,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Marking through mists of gunshot
The clouds of enemy.

Scanning the Anaconda
At every scale and joint;
And halting, glasses level
At gaze on "Dead Man's Point."

Thrice, Alabama's warning
Fell on a heedless ear,
While the relentless lead-storm,
Converging, hurtled near.

Till straight before his Chieftain,
Without a sound or sign,
He stood, a shield the grandest,
Against the Union line!

And then the glass was lowered
And voice that faltered not
Said, in its measured cadence,
"Why, Gracie, you'll be shot!"

And Alabama answered:
"The South will pardon me
If the ball that goes through Gracie
Comes short of Robert Lee!"

Swept a swift flash of crimson
Athwart the Chieftain's cheek,
And the eyes whose glance was "knighthood"
Spake as no king could speak.

And side by side with Gracie
He turned from shot and flame;
Side by side with Gracie
Up the grand aisle of Fame.

BEAUREGARD

Let the trumpet shout once more,
Beauregard!

Let the battle-thunders roar,
Beauregard!

And again by yonder sea,
Let the swords of all the free
Leap forth to fight with thee,
Beauregard!

Old Sumter loves thy name,
Beauregard!

Grim Moultrie guards thy fame,
Beauregard!

Oh! first in Freedom's fight;
Oh! steadfast in the right;
Oh! brave and Christian Knight;
Beauregard!

St. Michael, with his host,
Beauregard!

Encamps by yonder coast,
Beauregard!

And the Demon's might shall quail,
And the Dragon's terrors fail,
Were he trebly clad in mail,
Beauregard!

Not a leaf shall fall away,
Beauregard!

From the laurel won to-day,
Beauregard!

While the ocean breezes blow,
While the billows lapse and flow
O'er the Northman's bones below,
Beauregard!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Let the trumpet shout once more,
Beauregard!
Let the battle-thunders roar,
Beauregard!
From the center to the shore,
From the sea to the land's core,
Thrills the echo, evermore,
Beauregard!

AT CHARLESTON

GENERAL JUBAL EARLY

An Incident

A battery, on our left,
Had thundered through the day,
Deftly served, by the lanes it cleft,
In our lines across the way;
Gliding swift with the battle drift,
It moved and blazed away—
A meteor in the clouds of war,
A demon of dismay.

“Boom!” and a bullet brake
From the bellowing battery,
With a curl of smoke and a “whiz”—no
joke—
By the ear of Jubal E.,
And he turned in his saddle and spake,
“—— Take that battery.”

They went, as the wildfire runs!
Positions, from one to three—
They captured; but not the guns
Of the nimble battery!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

They hesitate! and they halt! Oh, shame!
And the battery boasted louder,
While a courier came thro' the fume and
flame
To the General for—"Powder!"

Stiff in his stirrups then
He stood in his mighty choler,
As he thundered along the van,
Where courier dared not follow—
"Powder!"—a cuss word—"Men!"
"Confound it! and can't ye holler!"

"If a Yankee can hide in 'll,
A Rebel is bound to follow!
Take the battery with a yell!
Forward, confound you, holler!"

They went for the guns as the red fire runs,
With a roar like a charging sea,
That shook the air! and then and there
They captured the battery;
And the loudest shout, as they bro't it out—
I mean no joke, and I make no doubt—
Was the shout of Jubal E.

THE GAP

(Boonsboro Gap, or South Mountain Pass)

To D. H. Hill

Prouder than Persia's noontide was
The dawn that hurled yon bannered mass,
The banded Orient, on the pass
Barred by thine arm, Leonidas!

But prouder still the vestal lights
Of glory on these vigil heights;
And proudest yet the hand that writes,
Here wrestled Arthur and his knights!

LABOR—SACRIFICE

With the device of a bullock; from the seal of a Southern gentleman.

That cream was of the kindest strain
That meadow ever drew
From sunlight and the summer rain,
From darkness and the dew!
That left no stain in yonder vein
But Heaven's—the sapphire blue.
That gentleman, we knew,
So gentle and so true;
A knight whose signet bore
A "Bullock," and no more;
A quaint device, by Sacrifice
And Labor won of yore!

And matchless sweet the golden wheat
That met and moulded him,
A man complete from head to feet
In grace of soul and limb;
That lent his gaze the lion's blaze,
His smile—who smiles like him?
Ah! tremulous and dim,
Through tears we think of him,
The knight whose signet bore
That quaint device of "Sacrifice"
And "Labor," and no more.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Upon no statelier sight
The circling sun hath smiled.
Nor oak of loftier height
Dropped shade so sweet and mild ;
Where love came down like light,
And happiness grew wild !
The sage, the little child,
Peasant and Prince, have smiled
Around his knees who bore
The Bullock ; quaint device
Of Toil and Sacrifice,
Which all his fathers wore,
Which he shall wear no more.

For he is dead ! Beneath the tread
Of battle, in the roar
That rent the sod, his face to God,
He went, and came no more !
The fragrance of the path he trod
In Sacrifice is o'er.
Yet all the kindest rays
Of all the knightliest days
Kindled forever more,
Around the cross he bore ;
Around the quaint device
Of Toil and Sacrifice
That our great Bishop wore.

THE CREST

To the tender love and fiery valor led and illustrated by
John B. Gordon.

The valiant to the van!
For here the contest lies!
The focal path of battle-wrath,
Where whoso buffets dies!
The red-ripe star of central war
Signals the bravest, "Rise!"

Ye far-off prairie flowers!
That deadly hush, ye know,
When the swift midnight lowers,
And the black northers blow!
And here the prairie flowers
Looked down upon the foe!

Braves from the Rio Grande—
Knights from the Shenandoah—
Sons of the central land
With the Stone Mountain core—
A handful in the hand
Of Glory, and no more!

The flower of valor's wreath,
Around the crest they form,
Like stars that smile on death
From Heaven's eternal calm—
Shining, though all beneath
Rocks to the bursting storm!

"Now! by your land's last claim,"
"On life's last loyalty"—

TICKNOR'S POEMS

"Go down!" and the gray flame
Leapt downward, joyously!
And, in the van, the foremost man,
Rode the good Robert Lee!

Fell hush upon the line!
Came halt to the attack!
Then burst the war's great "mine"
Of Glory—"Lee! go back!"
And by God's love divine,
They bore the Chieftain back!

And then, through blacker gloom
Than shrouds the charnel corse
They swept with stainless plume
And bore the Starry Cross!
And not the trump of Doom
Shall bring that triumph, loss!

Braves of the Rio Grande,
Knights of the Shenandoah,
Sons of the central land,
With the Stone Mountain core!
In that proud deed ye stand
Star-laureled, evermore!

LOYAL

To General Cleburne

The good Lord Douglas—dead of old—
In his last journeying
Wore at his heart, encased in gold,
The heart of Bruce, his king.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Through Paynim lands to Palestine,
For so his troth was plight;
To lay that gold on Christ his shrine,
Let fall what peril might.

By night and day, a weary way
Of vigil and of fight,
Where never rescue came by day,
Nor ever rest by night.

And one by one the valiant spears
Were smitten from his side,
And one by one the bitter tears
Fell for the brave that died.

Till fierce and black around his track
He saw the combat close,
And counted but the single sword
Against uncounted foes.

He drew the casket from his breast,
He bared his solemn brow;
Oh, foremost of the kingliest!
Go "first in battle" now!

Where leads my Lord of Bruce, the sword
Of Douglas shall not stay!
Forward! And to the feet of Christ
I follow thee, to-day.

The casket flashed; the battle clashed,
Thundered and rolled away;
And dead above the heart of Bruce
The heart of Douglas lay!

Loyal! Methinks the antique mould
Is lost, or theirs alone
Who sheltered Freedom's heart of gold,
Like Douglas, with their own!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

STONE MOUNTAIN

To Alexander Hamilton Stephens

Forged in the furnace of the world's mid-fire;
Smit of all scourges of the fierce and dire;
Worn of all waters; the volcano's core
Enters the Heavens at last, triumphant evermore!

Kindred to all, that, clasped by sod or shroud,
Kindles the crystal that shall cleave the cloud.
Crowned with the stars! a cenotaph to stand
Till the last flood of fire shall oversweep the land.

How vile to this, the tyrant-triumph, hid
In the worn Sphinx, the wasted Pyramid!
How poor and pale all pomps the world has known
To this unblazoned shaft of Georgia stone!

Whose name and fame shall front the ages with
Thine awful grace, imperial monolith?
With fire as central as the crater's own,
And soul as steadfast as the granite stone?

His, of the thunderous deluge, worn and tried!
Him, of the furnace-dungeon, purified!—
The crest of Memnon o'er the orient seas,
Hymettus-voiced with silvery symphonies.

Our Athos-Alexander, carven on
The unbowed head of mourning Macedon;
Tender as starlight, with the pleiad gaze
O'er the lost Eden of the lovely days.

Whose mighty "Work" salutes the sun at last,
The Rock Cathedral of the fiery Past,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Shrining the princely dust with sacramental care,
And kindling darkened aisles with censer, song and
prayer.

Touching old banners with their battle-glow,
And the worn bugles till their triumphs blow!
Lending sweet music to the tears that shed
The tenderest splendor o'er our Freedom's dead!

And clarion clangors to the starward arch,
Where her gray cohorts rally to the march;
Blending all glories of the arch of light,
To robe, and crown, and consecrate the "Right!"

A kingly vigil, where enchantment lies
On the pale lips of peerless chivalries!
A godlike deed, to bid these charnel gates
Blaze with the resurrection of the States!

May we not mate the mountain and the man,—
The granite dome and the great Georgian?
Kindred to all, that swathed by sod or shroud,
Kindles the crystal that shall cleave the cloud.

Their pathos One!—the melancholy grace
Of Sinai's shadow on the Prophet's face,
When the lone summit of the thunders saw
The broken People in the broken Law.

And the last splendor of the lightning fell
On shattered tablets and lost Israel!
One in their grandeur! Who shall bid apart
These stalwart coils that clasp our Georgia's heart?

Or crown this majesty that meets the Heavens
With other immortality than—"Stephens!"
Than His, whose voice in Freedom's name hath
given
From all this earth the noblest plea to Heaven!

A BATTLE BALLAD

To General J. E. Johnston

A Summer Sunday morning,
July the twenty-first,
In eighteen hundred sixty-one,
The storm of battle burst.

For many a year the thunder
Had muttered deep and low,
And many a year, through hope and fear,
The storm had gathered slow.

Now hope had fled the hopeful,
And fear was with the past;
And on Manassas' cornfields
The tempest broke at last.

A wreath above the pine-tops,
The booming of a gun;
A ripple on the cornfields,
And the battle was begun.

A feint upon our center,
While the foeman massed his might,
For our swift and sure destruction,
With his overwhelming "right."

All the summer air was darkened
With the tramping of their host;
All the Sunday stillness broken
By the clamor of their boast.

With their lips of savage shouting,
And their eyes of sullen wrath,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Goliath, with the weaver-beam,
The champion of Gath.

Are they men who guard the passes,
On our "left" so far away?
In thy cornfields, O Manassas,
Are they men who fought to-day?

Our boys are brave and gentle,
And their brows are smooth and white;
Have they grown to men, Manassas,
In the watches of a night?

Beyond the grassy hillocks
There are tents that glimmer white;
Beneath the leafy covert
There is steel that glistens bright.

There are eyes of watchful reapers
Beneath the summer leaves,
With a glitter as of sickles
Impatient for the sheaves.

They are men who guard the passes,
They are men who guard the ford;
Stands our David at Manassas,
The champion of the Lord.

They are men who guard our altars,
And beware, ye sons of Gath,
The deep and deathful silence
Of the lion in your path.

Lo! the foe was mad for slaughter,
And the whirlwind hurtled on;
But our boys had grown to heroes,
They were lions, every one.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And they stood a wall of iron,
And they shone a wall of flame,
And they beat the baffled tempest
To the caverns whence it came.

And Manassas' sun descended
On their armies crushed and torn,
On a battle bravely ended,
On a nation grandly born.

The laurel and the cypress,
The glory and the grave,
We pledge to thee, O Liberty!
The life-blood of the brave.

OUR LEFT

By the sword of St. Michael,
The old Dragon, threw!
By David, his sling,
And the giant he slew!
Let us write us a rhyme
As a record, to tell
How the South on a time,
Stormed the ramparts of Hell
With her bare-footed boys.

Had the South in her borders
A hero to spare?
Or a heart at her altars?
Lo! It's life-blood was *there!*
And the black, battle grime
Might never disguise
The smile of the South
On the lips and the eyes
Of her bare-footed boys.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

There's a grandeur in fight,
And a terror, the while;
But none like the light
Of that terrible smile;
The smile of the South
When the storm-cloud unrolls;
The lightning that loosens
The wrath in the souls
Of her bare-footed boys.

It withered the foe,
As the red light that runs
Through the dead forest leaves,
And he fled from his guns,
Grew the smile to a laugh—
Rose the laugh to a yell,
As the iron-clad hoofs
Clattered back into Hell
From our bare-footed boys.

THE RIDER IN GRAY

The Guerrilla

"Let us live with a hope!"

Let the bugle be mute, for he needs not its warning,
Nor the drum with its reveille strains;
For he rides to the tune of his steed stepping stilly
And the blood as it bounds in his veins,
In the silence of death,
With the swiftness of breath,
As the falcon that sweeps on his prey,
As the eagle that swings
On his thunder-bolt wings,
Is the rush of the rider in gray.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

There's a kiss on his cheek, but it murmured not
"Tarry";

And a tear, but it faltered not "Stay"—
He'll remember the lips when the foe lies before
him

And the eyes when the stars are away.

The forest lies black
That shelters his track,
And the swamp closes dark on his way.
But the blessing and cheer
Of that kiss and that tear
Shall ride with the rider in gray.

The winds may have heard, but they whispered it
never;

And the stars, but they may not tell,
The deed he hath wrought with a hero's endeavor
For the land that he loved so well.

The tyrant may boast
His numberless host
And exult in his haughty array,
But the angel of wrath
Follows hard on his path.
And strikes with the rider in gray.

While we live in the hopes of a better day, brother,
A morrow of sunlight and bloom.

Let us honor the brave, whose valor unfailing
Burned on through the midnight of gloom.

By the coursers so swift,
By the sabers they lift
And the scabbards they threw away,
May the light of the dawn
Of our Liberty's morn
Fall bright on the rider in gray.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

CANNON SONG

DEDICATION

To Captain E. A. Dawson

When the night grows black o'er the bivouac,
And the stars gleam cold and brightly,
Let the song that cheers our cannoneers
Be sung by our camp-fires nightly.
Ere the music shall die, ere the murmurs fly,
While the melody fades, yet lingers;
An echo shall come from the "Old Folks at
Home,"
And a blessing shall breathe on the singers.

SONG

For the Terrells

Aha! a song for the trumpet's tongue,
For the bugle to sing before us,
When our gleaming guns, like clarions,
Shall thunder in battle chorus!
Where the rifles ring, where the bullets sing,
Where the black bombs whistle o'er us,
With rolling wheel and rattling peal
We'll thunder in battle chorus!

CHORUS

With the cannon's flash and the cannon's
crash,
With the cannon's roar and rattle,
Let Freedom's sons, with their gleaming guns,
Go down to their country's battle!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Their brassy throats shall learn the notes
That make old tyrants quiver,
'Till the war is won or each Terrell gun
Grows cold with our hearts forever.
Where the laurel waves o'er our brothers'
 graves,
Who have gone to their rest before us,
Here's a requiem shall sound for them,
And thunder in battle chorus!

CHORUS

With the cannon's flash and the cannon's
 crash,
With the cannon's roar and rattle,
Let Freedom's sons, with their gleaming guns,
Go down to their country's battle!

By the light that lies in our Southern skies,
By the spirits that watch above us;
By the gentle hands in our summer lands,
And the gentle hearts that love us,
Our Father's faith let us keep till death,
Their fame in its cloudless splendor,
As men who stand for their mother-land,
And die—but never surrender!

CHORUS

With the cannon's flash and the cannon's
 crash,
With the cannon's roar and rattle,
Let Freedom's sons, with their gleaming guns,
Go down to their country's battle!

WEDDED IN WAR*

The trumpet hath rung in the valleys,
The mountains awake to the cry,
And the tread of a host, as it rallies,
Returns in the echo's reply!
For the answer that leaps to the order
That summons the swords of the free,
Is the bayonet's gleam on the border,
The battery's crash by the sea.

Though the fairest and dearest are grieving,
When the feast for the bridal lies spread,
Though the roses that bloom for the living
To-morrow may droop for the dead;
Still the answer that leaps to the order
That summons the souls of the free,
Is the bayonet's gleam on the border,
The battery's crash by the sea.

Where the fiercest of tempests shall rattle,
Where the thickest of foemen shall reel,
Let Georgia go down to the battle,
A phalanx of flame and of steel:
Let the answer that leaps to the order
That summons her sons ever be,
The bayonet's gleam on the border,
The battery's crash by the sea.

July, 1861

*Written on the double wedding of George W. Dillingham and William F. Hall.—From the army on leave of absence.

THE SOUTH—IN MEMORIAL

Easter, April 26, 1865

Then cross her hands in perfect rest,
And lay the Bible on her breast,
In witness of the good she sought
In token that her task is wrought.

And carve on columns high and white
Her foeman's Fame to prove her right;
And weave at will the victor's wreath,
To veil his crown of fire beneath.

For him, the worm that will not cease,
And the fierce fiends that rend his peace;
For her a glory to outclimb
All glories of recorded time.

Twin-born with Liberty, she died
In her last battle, by her side;
Nor left upon the darkened earth
A living witness of her worth.

And not before the earth or skies,
Shall prouder monument arise
Than hers, whose weak memorial lies
In these sweet lips and shrouded eyes.

In token that her task is wrought—
In witness of the good she sought—
Cross her poor hands in perfect rest,
And lay God's volume on her breast.

SOUTH IN MEMORIAL

"Cordelia! Cordelia!"

To General Robert Toomes, April, 1869

The light hath lost its summer tints—
The world, with woe, hath whitened, since
The shrouded April, long ago,
That laid our Lily in the snow!

The star that trembles down the West
Returns not from its quiet rest—
And if the dawn awakes the flowers,
They shine for other eyes than ours!

And yet while grace of deed and thought
Shall linger where her hands have wrought
We see the April of her eyes,
And wait her summer to arise.

We wait the dawn with spice and myrrh—
We tarry by the sepulchre—
Where still the sentry's sullen tread
Insults the victor, not the Dead.

We cross her hands in perfect rest—
We lay the Bible on her breast—
We smooth the sod, we seal the stone,
Her task is wrought, God rules His own.

Twin-born with Liberty, she died
In the great battle by her side;
Mute, save the proud appeal, that lies
In silent lips and shrouded eyes.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

The white palms crossed in perfect rest—
The Book of God upon her breast—
In witness of the good she sought—
In token that her task is wrought.

'Tis a proud monument they rear,
By this proud pathos of Judea—
This Roman scoff that fronts the skies—
Watching lest Righteousness arise!

Watch, Eagle!—for a tale is told
Of slumber on thine eyes of old—
Of triumph, blind; of tears that kept
The better vigil that they wept.

Watch, Roman! lest the dawning hour
Write dust and ashes on thy power—
And retribution, swift and dread,
Rise with Righteousness from the Dead!

THE HALL

“Page Brook”

There is dust on the doorway, there is mold on the
wall—

There's a chill at the hearthstone—a hush through
the hall;

And the stately old mansion stands darkened and
cold

By the leal, loving hearts that it sheltered of old.

No light at the lattice, no gleam from the door;

No feast on its table, no dance on its floor;

But “Glory departed,” and silence alone.

“Dust unto Dust” upon pillar and stone!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

No laughter of childhood, no shout on the lawn ;
No footsteps to echo the feet that are gone :
Feet of the beautiful, forms of the brave,
Failing in other lands, gone to the grave.

No carol at morning, no hymn rising clear,
No song at the bridal, nor chaunt at the bier.
All the chords of its symphonies scattered and
 riven,
Its altar in ashes, its incense—in Heaven !

'Tis an ache at the heart, thus lonely to stand
By the wreck of a Home once the pride of the
 land ;
Its chambers unfilled as its children depart,
The melody stilled in its desolate heart.

Yet softly the sunlight still rests on the grass,
And lightly and swiftly the cloud-shadows pass,
And still the wide meadow exults in the sheen,
With its foam crest of snow, and its billows of
 green !

And the verdure shall creep to the mouldering
 wall,
And the sunshine shall sleep in the desolate hall—
And the foot of the pilgrim shall find to the last
Some fragrance of Home, at this shrine of the
 Past.

UNDER THE WILLOWS

Brave "ends" may consecrate a cruel story,
And crown a dastard deed ;
Brave hearts are laureled with eternal glory
That held another creed.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Who knows the end? or in what record written
The crowned results abide?
The volume closed not with an Abel smitten
Or Christ the crucified.

How poor and pale from yonder heights of
Heaven
Our Caesar's pomp appears
To those who wear the purple robes of Stephen,
Or Mary's crown of tears!

So let us watch a single pale star, keeping
Its vigil o'er the tide;—
No truth is lost for which the true are weeping,
Nor dead for which they died.

DIXIE

Air—"Annie Laurie"

Oh! Dixie's homes are bonnie,
And Dixie's hearts are true;
And 'twas down in dear old Dixie
Our life's first breath we drew;
And there our last we'd sigh,
And for Dixie, dear old Dixie,
We'll lay us down and die.

No fairer land than Dixie's
Has ever seen the light;
No braver boys than Dixie's
To stand for Dixie's right.
With hearts so true and high,
And for Dixie, dear old Dixie,
To lay them down and die.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Oh! Dixie's vales are sunny,
And Dixie's hills are blue;
And Dixie's skies are bonnie,
And Dixie's daughters, too,
As stars in Dixie's sky;
And for Dixie, dear old Dixie,
We'd lay us down and die.

No more upon the mountain,
No longer by the shore,—
The trumpet song of Dixie
Shall shake the world no more;
For Dixie's songs are o'er,
Her glory gone on high,
And the brave who bled for Dixie
Have laid them down to die.

ARTHUR THE GREAT KING*

"Men wyt not whether he lyveth or be dede!"
—*Ancient MS.*

To such a Kingly alliance of purity and constancy I
would dedicate these lines following in the person of
JEFFERSON DAVIS.

A leaf, O Laureate, for thy crown,
For this fair tracery—
This silvery mist that shadows down
A Glory to the sea!

*The genius of Mr. Tennyson has so illuminated the
Legends of King Arthur that probably none to whom this
poem comes will need a reminder of his achievements,
aspirations or mysterious destiny. Should there be one
such, I refer him to the Teacher, who from the vantage

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Men walk as in the halls of death
With mute though heavy tread;
Men murmur with the muffled breath,
"Alive? or is he dead!"

A shining bark hath cleft the dark—
We see the seraph eyes;
We hear above the morning lark
The silvery psalteries;
The song-burst of a triumph-arc
Star-pulsing in the skies—
The day may dwindle to a spark:—
The Great King never dies!

A light, O Laureate, on thy crown
Of more than laurel be
That set the star "Excalibur"
Forever on the sea!

Not "Dead",—though earth's last mountain be
Piled on the black depths of the sea,
And the last flame of lightning claim
To carve his "Memory"!

There be of warders on the wall,
Have heard by night his bugle-call,
And watchers, ere the dawn uncloses,
Whose very tears are tint with rose.

point of Poet Laureate of England, has reached the whole heart of humanity with a voice as sweet, and a significance as noble, as can be found anywhere in literature.

While Dickens has done much to mellow and soften our common life, it is Tennyson who had glorified it—given it grace, bloom, and spirit. Penetrating our inmost recesses, he evokes whatever of that ultimate perfection which we call "Poetry" may linger there; and the man must be base

TICKNOR'S POEMS

As on some widowed neck the woe
Of mourning veils a whiter snow
Than April's first of whiteness, so
 Across our path of murk and wrath
The clouds unclasp at times and show
 The vigil-gleam at "Camelot"!

His regal front is seamed and gaunt,
His kingly curls are grizzled-scant,
His war-steed worn to Rosinante!

There's mist upon his knightly mail,
And dust on every golden scale
Of the great "Dragon," crest to tail!
Like moonlit mist on midnight snow
The sun of battle smoulders low!
Alas! the King at Camelot!

But on his SWORD nor mould nor loss,
From stainless steel to starry cross!

Ye wist, ye early at the tomb,
The whiteness that is like his plume!
Beloved of the morning-star!—
Your eyes have seen "Excalibur!"

beyond naming, or blameless beyond conception, whom he cannot exalt or purify.

Many that have not heard his name have beholden his brightness in the lives of others, and profited "unaware" by his ministration.

Of the "Great King," then, so dear to English hearts and English poetry, I will only say that he typifies all emotions which love righteousness and hate iniquity; that he embodies, also, a great Hope, the greatest which can cheer our Mortality or emphasize our Immortality—the undying Hope of a final and eternal Justice.

And ye, that in the temples pray,
Have witnessed, when the aisles are gray,
A sudden rapture cleave the pane
Beyond the oriel's glory-stain—
That lingered in the holy place,
The "iris" of an angel's grace!
Then HE whose head it kindled on
Shined like Uriel of the sun!—
And were his face the Parian stone,
And were his smile King Arthur's own—
Of all that met his kindling eyes
Not one should marvel, did he Rise!

"These Little Ones"! these lambs that bear
The dew-cross of our Christ, His care,
These lilies, more than Eden blest,
"These Little Ones" have touched His hem,
Have looked upon his diadem,
Have heard His footsteps walk with them,
And bring us, from the shrouded isle
Where His great glory bides the while,
The very sunshine of his smile!
And one I know, whose saber shone
The battle's eye-light, years ago,
Who wears upon his folded hands
The welcome of the angel lands,
And bears upon his smiling lips,
The seal no shadow can eclipse.

Who waits me, as the days expire
With Arthur's soul of love and fire.

Doubt we then?

While sacrilege is charnel wise—
The arm that guilt in armor flies!
That Arthur—the great King shall rise!
That God's Eternal Truth shall reign
Imperial o'er "His own" again!

EARLIER POEMS

EARLIER POEMS

TO THE OLD ELM TREE*

Like the foam on the wave
My boyhood has sped,
And its rainbow colors
Are broken and fled,
And a tear oft glistens
In memories ee
For the days I have passed
'Neath the old elm tree.

On the silvery pinions
Of butterfly Hope
My mind often wanders
From realities' scope,
But weary it turns
And gladly doth flee
To the days I have passed
'Neath the old elm tree.

Though Ambition may twine me
Her chaplet most fair—
'Tis a wreath that may wither,
Unstable as air.
A chaplet I'll weave
More pleasant to me—
A garland of Leaves
From the old elm tree.

*Written at the age of seventeen. This poem originally contained another stanza, which has been lost.

And when I have quitted
The toils of this life,
Disgusted of all,
Its cares and its strife,
I'll seek me a home,
And that home shall be
Overspread by the boughs
Of the old elm tree.

COLUMBUS, GA.,
December, 1839.

SKETCHES WITH A PINE STRAW

Writ on "Sande"

THE PINE TREE

It stands where Nature's pulses freeze
Beneath the Polar eye,
And hangs its drooping banners out
'Neath India's burning sky.
From north to south, from east to west,
Where e'er the sun may shine,
It lifts and waves its lordly crest—
The all-enduring Pine.

In regions wildest and unknown,
Beside the restless sea,
It breathes its deep and mellow tone
Through Nature's minstrelsy;
'Tis heard upon the mountain's breast
And by the river's line,
And mid the busy haunts of men,—
The melancholy Pine.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Its balmy breath is on the air,
Amid the forest gloom,
The early winds of morning bear
Its delicate perfume.
Its dewy odor fills the sense
At evening's slow decline,
And night's soft pinions linger still
Around the fragrant Pine.

I love it—it hath been to me
An old familiar friend,
And broadly o'er my native land
Its waving branches bend.
And widely through its hallowed soil
Its rugged roots entwine,
And wreath with every thought of home
The well-remembered Pine.

I love it, for its music breathes
O'er many a hallowed spot
Where lie the loved and lowly dead
Who may not be forgot;
And when I seek their holy rest,
Oh! may this heart recline,
My Southern home, upon thy breast,
Beneath the mourning Pine.

THE OLD DEAD PINE

Its leaf is withered, its branch decayed,
And the brave green crown it bore
Hath passed with the music the night-wind made
As it swept through its boughs of yore;
And it stands like a monarch to death betrayed,
Whose glory returns no more,

Lifting its giant arms on high,
Penciled out on the clear blue sky,
As the last red ray of the sun's decline
Colors with beauty the old dead pine.

We may not tell of the years that have fled
Since its shadow hath circled there,
Ere the lightning withered its stately head
And its trunk grew brown and bare ;
But it stands like a mourner above the dead,
In desolate, deep despair,
Lifting its giant arms on high,
Penciled out on the clear blue sky,
As the last red ray of the sun's decline
Colors with beauty the old dead pine.

We may not tell of the thoughts that keep
Its treasures of olden days
Since it saw the wild war band's circling sweep
Or rang to their milder lays ;
But it stands like a spirit whose wisdom deep
No change might more amaze,
Lifting its giant arms on high,
Penciled out on the clear blue sky,
As the last red ray of the sun's decline
Colors with beauty the old dead pine.

We may not tell how it sprung from earth,
How it grew to a stately tree,
'Till the dim day of its distant birth
Was lost from its memory—
'Till its glory was rent by the midnight mirth
Of the storm-king's revelry,
And 'twas left with its giant arms on high
Penciled out on the clear blue sky,
As the last red ray of the sun's decline
Colors with beauty the old dead pine.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Yet many a lesson the old Pine hath
For the human heart to con—
For strength in the dark day's stormy wrath—
For peace when the night comes on—
For a Heavenly trust when the weary path
Of its pilgrimage is done.
To stand with a strong heart proud and high,
With a trusting gaze on the far blue sky,
To wait for our last sun's last decline,
This we may learn from the old Dead Pine.

July 20, 1845

TO LITTLE ANN PAGE CARTER

The seer from the starry skies
Would seek futurity;
But in the lovelier light that lies
In the soft azure of thine eyes
I'll read thy fate for thee:

All woman's tenderness and love
In those silk shadows shine;
May a bright blessing from above,
With all that thy young heart must prove
Of woman's lot, be thine.

Thy forehead's violet veinlets tell
That to that brow belong
Rich treasures of the tome and shell,
The might of genius, and the spell
Of high, entrancing song.

I read for thee no diadem
Of glittering jewels wrought;

TICKNOR'S POEMS

This brow shall wear no radiant gem,
No flashing coronet to dim
The light of burning thought.

No scepter for this tiny hand—
No scepter save the pen—
That wings the spirit's high command,
More potent than a monarch's wand
To sway the hearts of men.

I read no jeweled robe to twine
Around thy queenly form,
But hearts that bow at beauty's shrine,
And sterner souls shall kneel at thine,
And own its holier charm.

Thus with the poet's prophet powers
Thy future lot is given,—
To tread through earth a path of flowers
Where rosy-winged and happy hours
Shall guide thy feet to heaven.

TO LITTLE ANN PAGE CARTER

The Seer, did he mark in vain
Thy natal star arise,
Set with the sadly shrouded light
Of thy soft azure eyes?
Those eyes, whose glance had caught above
Unuttered eloquence of love.

The Poet, did he wreath in vain
Thy gentle brow with flowers,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Fled with thy cheek of softer bloom
From this dark path of ours?
Those flowers but tell, beside the spot,
The bloom the grave surrenders not.

The spell is broke, yet not in vain
That augury was given,
For thou hast won thy crown; thy star
Hath melted into Heaven,
Yet left to cheer us as it fled
The gentle memory of the dead.

November, 1845

ON THE DEATH OF HIS GRANDMOTHER

Most peacefully she passed through life, most gently
did she die,
Unquelled the music of her voice, unquenched her
beaming eye;
Years had not reft a single charm that won us to her
side,
Nor hushed a single tone of love to which our hearts
replied;
Time had but left a lovelier light upon her honored
head,
The grace that marked her early years still beauti-
fied the dead.

Oh! tears are not for those who leave this bleak
world for the blest,
Not for the servants of the Lord who from their
labors rest,
Not for the loved departed, in Life's glad summer
gone—

TICKNOR'S POEMS

But for the broken-hearted, who tread the world
alone—
And not for thee who all the paths of righteousness
hath trod,
And now, when full of honored years art gathered
up to God.

The prints of lingering feet that tread around her
lowly tomb,
And scattered flowers that o'er it shed their beauty
and perfume,
The sadness of the lip and eye whene'er her name
is heard,
And memory wakes her thousand thoughts at that
familiar word,
All tell that with the fading light of her unmeasured
worth—
A beauty and a holiness have passed away from
earth.

April, 1849

DEATH

We have seen the strong man fail,
The glorious eyes burn dim,
The cheek in death grow pale,
And we have wept for Him.
We have seen the lovely die,
The beautiful of earth,
With gifts of promise high,
Just bursting into birth,
We have felt that life was vain
Beside the closing grave,
How weak its silver chain
How impotent to save;

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Yet with the darkness of the hour
Hath passed the impress of its power.

We have marked the faith that springs
In life's last labored breath,
When failed the heart's bright strings
Beneath the hands of Death;
The smile upon the cheek
E'en while that cheek grew chill—
We have felt our treasures weak
Yet loved those treasures still;
We have heaved the secret sigh,
And turned to earth again,
Where all the heart holds dear
Is swift to pass away;
Still clinging with that feeble grasp
To things that wither in our clasp.

Our hopes are reared on dust—
Our joys a less than dream—
A rope of sand our trust—
Our life a meteor gleam,
Its birth and death a tear,
Its suffering and peace
A moment mingle here
And in that moment cease.
Hope after hope retires
And pleasures pass away,
But till the spark expires
We trust its fitful ray,
And seek not for that better part
That fills and purifies the heart.

Where dwells the human heart
Amid earth's brightest things
But finds the bitter part
That desolation brings?

To smile—'tis but to wear
Deceit o'er sorrow's cup;
To weep—'tis but to bear
Life's common burden up;
To hope—'tis but the bloom
That lingers 'round decay;
To love—'tis but to doom
The loved to pass away;
And not in earth's dark walk is given
The high, unfading joys of heaven.

ON THE DEATH OF A LITTLE GIRL

Ere from the brow its childish grace,
Or from the lips the tone
That told of childhood's sinless days
In melody had flown;
The heart in darkness weeps alone,
Her gentle presence fled,
Her spirit with th' Eternal One,
Her beauty with the dead.

Aye, leave the soft light on the brow,
Stir not one fallen tress,
For death's cold hand hath hallowed now
Each line of loveliness;
And let the silken lashes press
Thus lightly o'er her eyes,
As like a thing of holiness
All beautiful she lies.

Aye, leave her to her holy rest,
Amid her own loved flowers,
And be the quiet of her breast
As healing peace to ours.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

As earth returns to summer showers
The treasures of its trust,
Shall Heaven restore in holier hours
Our loved ones from the dust.

1845

TO A PINY-WOODS GIRL

A child of earth with Heaven's own beauty warm
A mortal melting to a Seraph form.

I have looked into thine earnest eyes,
Thou fair and sinless child,
And many darker memories
Their beauty hath beguiled.
I have looked into thy gentle eyes—
My soul hath drunk their light,
And many treasured thoughts arise
Around my heart to-night.

I have looked into thine azure eyes
As the soul might look to Heaven
When to the troubled bosom flies
The hope to be forgiven.
I have looked into thy gentle eyes
As the lone heart looks above,
Seeking beyond the happy skies
The treasures of its love.

I have looked into thy beaming eyes,
I had dreamed the world all cold,
And 'mid its sweetest mysteries
My heart was growing old:
I have looked into thine earnest eyes
And my heart this lesson hath,
How much of holy beauty lies
Around our daily path.

1845

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TICKNOR'S POEMS

TO —————

"Not in those visions to the heart displaying
Forms which it sighs, but to have only dreamed,
Hath aught like Thee, in truth or fancy seemed."

The visions of the painter's heart
His pencil may express—
The sculptor's bright conceptions start
To life and loveliness.
Rich language to the soul hath brought
Full many a gentle word
To wing with life the lightest thought
By which its depths are stirred;
But not a language, or the tone
That gentle music brings,
Not all that breathes in sculptured stone
Or from the pencil springs—
Not all the dreams that people earth
With beings bright and fair
Can aid the heart to body forth
Thine image glowing there.

'Tis when the soul forgets its tears,
Its path of toil and pain,
And travels back through weary years
To be a child again;—
'Tis when the cheek its early glow
Of sinless beauty wears
And angel forms might bless a brow
As beautiful as theirs;—
'Tis when o'er childhood's slumbers deep
The dreams of Heaven descend,
And seraph forms that hallow sleep
With earthly visions blend:—

TICKNOR'S POEMS

'Tis then the soul may tell the might
To thy sweet presence given,
Where earth but wreathes with lovelier
light
The loveliest gifts of Heaven.

May 10, 1845

TO MISS MARY HUNT

What constitutes a handsome face?
The secret would you know
That gives the brow its softest grace,
The cheek its purest glow?

'Tis not the eye of liquid light,
The timid or the bold,
The winter's ice may be more bright
And yet not half so cold.

'Tis not the hair like raven's plume,
With gems amid its jet;
The midnight hath a richer gloom
With brighter jewels set.

'Tis not the lip, so fresh and full
With life's own rosy hue;
The bud may be more beautiful
And far more fragrant too.

'Tis not the voice, whose music brings
A brighter charm than all,
For echo's voice as sweetly rings
Through some deserted hall.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

The seraph smile of sweet content,
The sunshine of the soul,—
This is the charm most eloquent
That beautifies the whole.

And when its winning graces cling
To such a brow as thine,
Each sorrow is a sacred thing,
Each smile indeed divine.

1845

TO ———

When twilight tints with changing hue
The gathered clouds of even,
And pours its flood of purple through
The golden gates of Heaven;
When winds are hushed and waves are stilled
And fancy wanders free,
My heart, my thoughts, unchanged, unchilled,
Would fly afar to thee.

The world may win that heart awhile,
Those thoughts may turn away,
Lured by the light of glory's smile
Or pleasure's fitful ray;
But still though all the scenes they gild
Be fair and bright to me,
My heart, my thoughts, unchanged, unchilled,
Shall fly afar to thee.

And disappointment's hand may steal
Her rosy wreath from mirth,
And I, as all who live, may feel
The weariness of earth;

TICKNOR'S POEMS

But still, tho' hope may cease to build
With beams of memory,
My heart, my thoughts, unchanged, unchilled,
Shall fly afar to thee.

SHELL CREEK, 1845

TO THE TALLAPOOSA RIVER

River, sweet River, with thy path of light,
And glittering treasures for the sea,
Exulting ever in thy mountain might
Of gathered waters, fetterless and free;
Well may the lone heart love to muse by thee,
To mark thy beauties varying as they rise,
To fix thine image in the heart, to be
In stranger lands and 'neath far distant skies
The peerless star of peace and brightest memories.

The rock that saw thy wave to beauty start,
A silver streamlet from the mountain's crest,
And the sweet valley where e'en now my heart
Looks out upon thy cradled water's rest—
These have thy smiles of changing beauty blest,
And these with all that gathers to thy side
To gaze into the depths of thy bright breast,
Returns that blessing to thy rolling tide
In every form and hue of beauty mingling wide.

River, wild River, thy waves are at play,
Rolling forever away, away,
'Mid the gloom of the forest, the frown of the hills,
Or flashing in sunlight, beautiful still,
The eagle looks down from his nest on high,
And the wild deer greets thee with fearless eye,
For they love, wild River, to linger by thee,
As thou rollest forever from mountain to sea.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

River, lone River, nations have sprung;
Along thy wild borders the war cry has rung;
And nations have passed from thy blooming side,
As the light foam flashing along thy tide;
They have passed away from their native shore,
And thy waters, lone River, shall know them no
more.

But thou are unchanged, still lonely and free,
Rolling forever from mountain to sea.

River, strong River, nations shall come
And mark thy green banks for the strangers'
home;
Their stately buildings shall spring in pride,
Their voices shall echo along thy side,
They will fetter the strength of thy rolling waves,
But thy waters shall dimple around their graves,
As they fall like the leaves from the autumn tree,
And thou rollest forever from mountain to sea.

River, sweet River, when hope shall decay,
When Life's fairest visions shall pass away,
When the freshness of spirit is faded and gone,
When the heart through the world must wander
alone,

Thy memory back to my soul shall bring
The brightness and freshness of Life's young
spring,
And waters of healing thy waves shall be
As thou rollest, sweet River, from mountain to
sea.

River, bold River, the rock is thy birth,
Thy mission a blessing to blossoming earth;
The cataract's dash with its glittering spray
And the glance of the rapid, thy giant play;

TICKNOR'S POEMS

The lakelet's repose, with its shadowy breast
In its calmness and beauty, thy cradled rest,
With a pathway of glory, an anthem of glee,
Thou rollest forever from mountain to sea.

1844

CHEROKEE BLUFF

The rock that beetling from thy bosom bears
The last red light of Heaven upon its brow
And wreathes the ivy's verdant growth of years
Around its rugged front is lovely now,
Tinged with the parting twilight's purple glow;
The river monarch, in rich robes arrayed,
Gazing upon the azure tide below;
And silver wavelets, their last homage paid,
Sink at his feet to rest, yet murmuring half afraid.

And legend links with yonder dizzy height
A tale of terror of the olden days;
There where the eagle pauses from his flight,
And where the mountain goat might scarcely
graze,
A band had gathered, as tradition says,
In battle vanquished, by their foemen pressed;
There with their dark eyes flashing glorious
rays,
Each mantle rent, and soiled each stately crest,
They stood with burning thoughts, yet stern and
stirless breast.

What hope for them! 'Twere all in vain to yield,
The stake's the mercy that the victor shows;
Before them lay their last dread battle-field,
Around, in front, in narrowing circle, close

TICKNOR'S POEMS

The vengeful faces of outnumbering foes ;
Behind, in mighty masses of bleak stone
 Barring all flight, the precipice arose—
There came a shout—ere echo caught the tone,
A rush, a gurgling cry—and the brave band was
 gone!

1845

A LOCK OF INDIAN HAIR

I have cherished it long, I would keep it still
Close to my heart, till my heart grew chill—
I have worn it there through weariest years,
'Tis damp with a warrior's only tears
As he wept for the beauty so pure and mild
That passed from his path with his lovely child.

I have seen it wave to the soft wind's play
When she came to meet me at close of day—
When her light step sprang to the glad surprise,
And the clear light glistened within her eyes,
And the broad woods rang with the glee they
 heard
When my old arms circled my fairest bird.

I have smoothed it oft when she sank to rest
With her soft cheek pillowed upon my breast,
When her heart beat calm in its peaceful tide,
And her breath came warm to this withered side,
And a dream smile came in its spirit glow
As I stirred the dark tress from her pure young
 brow.

And I saw it again when her soul had fled,
And damply it clung to the brow of the dead—

TICKNOR'S POEMS

The light from her radiant eyes was gone,
And her cheek was chill as the mountain storm;
I severed it then, for I could not bear
That all of my bright one should perish there.

Take it, pale stranger, I go afar—
My guide is the light of the western star;
But guard this tress as a sacred trust—
A holy link to the holiest dust—
And ere the bright years of thy life shall wane
She will claim the dark braid of her childhood
again.

September 29, 1844

SKETCHES WITH A PINE STRAW

"Writ on Sande"

No. II

THE ROSE-VINE IN THE CHURCH
WINDOW

Come in, oh, lovely rose,
Come with thy bending crest.
Type of the branch of peace that grows
Among the blest.

Come with thy balmy breath,
Thine incense of perfume.
Come with thy green and sunny wreath
Of summer bloom.

Tell of thy lowly birth,
The soft and dallying air;
Tell of the kindly gifts of earth,
Heaven's holy care.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Tell of the wild bird's call
At morning by thy side;
Tell of the gentle dews that fall
At even-tide.

Whisper of all things fair,
Thine own unclouded days,
Tell of thy Spirit's voiceless prayer
Thy silent praise.

Though not one murmured word
May from thy bosom steal,
Save when thy bending leaves are stirred
By organ's peal.

Still in thy verdure bright
Come with thy soft repose
And still the heart shall bless thy light,
Oh, lovely rose!

SONG

Written at midnight, when "a nightmare visited me, and among many other fantastic tricks which it instituted for my annoyance it sang me the following song":

Oh! what is Earth! A "table d'hôte"
With viands plain or rare,
That finds for every different throat
A different "bill of fare."

What's Life? "A chicken pie," (I trust
My muse the figure owns,)
Where many seek the "upper crust"
And all must "crack the bones."

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And what is Fame? An empty "puff"
A "trifle," light as air,
And they are last to cry "enough,"
Who get the largest share.

And what is Love? A "pudding's" smile
Where different spices woo,
But "heart burn" lingers in its wile
And indigestion too.

And what is Knowledge? "Turtle soup"
Where "calves' heads" often swim,
Where some in deepest darkness grope,
And some the surface skim.

And what is Friendship? "Punch," whose
sweet
Must with its sour combine
To make, or as we part or meet,
A "nectar" most divine.

And what is Death? Alas! The "bill,"
Which all who eat must pay,
And tho' at best a "bitter pill"
It wipes all scores away.

And what are all, when numbered up,
For which we seek or sigh?
A "toast" above a "stirrup cup,"
"Eat, drink, for soon ye die."

March 14, 1845

TICKNOR'S POEMS

TO HIS HORSE*

Who carries me, from day to day,
So kind, so gentle and so gay,
Who never kicks or runs "away"?
My Kitty.

Who's slender, strong, and thorough-bred,
With Iris' neck and Psyche's head,
With Venus' eye, and Juno's tread?
My Kitty.

Who trots, or paces, lopes or walks,
And dances too, but never balks,
Who often thinks and almost talks?
My Kitty.

Who when the bridge was old and weak,
Went charging over "like a streak"
And left I rolling in the creek?
My Kitty.

Who, when at last she's dead and gone,
Shall have a monumental stone
With this here epitaph thereon?
My Kitty.

Here Kitty lies! Death claimed his prey
And Kitty could not answer "neigh"—
Woe worth the case, woe worth the day
That cost thy life, my gallant Bay.
My Kitty!

*A note on third stanza runs to this effect:

" * * * * I know she thinks
She looks so wery vicked ven she vinks."

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

INSCRIPTION

In the scrap-book of Mrs. E. P. Carter

The pencil lingers o'er a page so white!
Falters the chisel when the hand would smite
Even for beauty, in the block so bright.

The hand may mold; the marble does its part
Clad in the whiteness, lo! enkindled Art
Finds a new beauty nestling at her heart.

Soft be the touch upon this tablet's snow
Around whose verge the violet shall blow,
And Love keep vigil while the lilies grow.

ILLUMINATING LETTERS

To Mrs. Evelyn Page Carter

She wrought: and at her reverent touch,
That lingered long in loving much,

As to the sunlight and the dew
The tendril twined, the floweret grew,

Till burned around each holy name
A brightness as of altar flame;

Anthem and incense in each word
That bore the blossom or the bird;

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Each letter's self a shrine, where art
Uttered the worship of the heart.

And still she wrought; and still her touch,
That lingered long in loving much,

Recalled their task in that old time
Who saw the slow cathedral climb,

Grand with the prayers of many days,
And glowing in its orb of praise;

Unfolding, as it neared the skies,
A passion-flower of centuries;

Rich in all grace that love alone
The taught of Heaven can teach to stone.

Such love as waits the dawn, and gave
The watch at midnight to His grave,

Steadfast and tireless, till the hour
Unveils the temple's perfect flower,

"Christ!" May He wreathe, as these are
wrought,
Our lives with grace of deed and thought!

WOMAN

Written for an address before the Medical Society of
ye State of Georgia.

Wife! Mother! Sister! and what sweeter name
For lovelier spirit in a lovelier frame?
For her whose virtues might redeem the curse
That came through Adam on the universe?

TICKNOR'S POEMS

At her fond touch what fiend of torment flies!
At her sweet smile what angel hopes arise
Brighter than aught this arid world has given
Since Jacob's dream climbed blossoming to
Heaven!

Trained in her school let tempered art confess
The might of love, the power of gentleness
To baffle death, or bid the dying eyes
Kindle at last with light from Paradise.

A FRAGMENT

From the poem to William Peabody on his great donations to the schools.

Millions of peace! and its mission was done!
And the dazzle shall cease from the sky with the
sun!

We have hymns at our home, we have taught them
to bear
On their tremulous pinions the weight of a prayer!

God bless the great gift! God bless the great
giver!
With love like a sea, with peace like a river.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

TO OUR VENERATED FRIEND OF THE
"CORNER STONE"

General James Bethune, by a venerable Contemporary

And so his locks are frosty !
His beard is long and white !
What matter so the soul be green,
And so the heart be bright ?
One leg will do to stand upon
When standing for the right.

Why look with utter darkness on
The ever-opening skies ?
With heavy feet, why go to meet
Our lost one's loving eyes ?
Why lay a withered heart before
The gates of Paradise ?

A wilderness, without a spot
Where bubbling water flows,
A desert waste that hath forgot
All fragrance of the rose,
Is his, whose pathway brightens not
Toward his journey's close.

THE FLOWERS

To Mrs. E. P. N. Carter

A blessing on the broad, bright lands
Whose children come to ours,
And lead us with their fragrant hands
Around the world of flowers.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

No dust upon the sandalled feet,
As they who go to find,
In other lands, a flower as sweet
As one they left behind.

With them our thoughts all journeys take,
With them our fancies roam,
And ever when we will, we wake
And find ourselves at home.

They wake for us the breath and bloom,
Where soft Circassia smiles;
They veil beneath their tender bloom
The maidens of the isles.

They bid the green oasis creep
Around the desert wells;
They sound on many a cedared steep
The sweet pagoda bells.

All times and climes they journey through,
Until their pathway lies,
Beyond the gates of morning, to
The walks of Paradise.

And many an angel of the earth
Their upward path hath trod,
Gone from our garden gateways, forth
Into the arms of God.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

"FELIX"

There is an ancient moral
Whose pith I thus convey,—
Who slumbers on his laurel
Was vanquished yesterday.

Though greener fields may brighten
Than yet the sun hath known;
Though whiter harvests whiten
Than ever seed were sown;

Above the breast of summer
The thunder-bolt may burst;
And around the sheaves of harvest
The winter gales are nursed.

Life's loftiest triumph trembles
Beneath the lightest march,—
Till Death, that carves the keystone,
Writes Felix on the arch.

THE BROWN BRIDGE

The brown bridge spans the streamlet and
The evergreens from hand to hand
Arch the roadway's snow-white sand.

A picture! and I loved the same
Till Annie there to meet me came,
And turned my picture to a frame!

An oval, such as might entwine
The mild Madonna of a shrine
From some old master's hand divine.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And ever since, in passing there,
The same sweet phantom haunts the air
With azure eyes and golden hair.

Grow on, ye evergreens, and throw
Soft shadows on the dust below!
And ye dark waters murmur low

Of other streams, not dark or wide,
So Annie with the grace that died
Shall meet me on the other side.

"THE EXACT SITUATION"

A hunter, with the luck to roam
Too near the "Ingen nation,"
Returned to find his happy home
A hopeless desolation.

His buildings burned, his people slain,
His fields in dire disorder;
His spoons, his cattle and his grain—
His long life's labor and its gain—
Dispersed with the marauder.

He stood appalled! A granite-stone
Hath greater power to "cuss"!
And when he spoke, 'twas only, "John,
It's too — Ridiculous"!

Poor Dixie hath reserved her wrath
In speechless speculation.
Such mean, malicious mischief hath
"Fatigued her indignation."*

*General Toombs

THE BOWIE KNIFE

"A war of artillery."—McCLELLAN

Hardly at rifle range,
Of half a league or so,
Was the battle wrought by the brave who fought
Up in New Mexico,—
Was the bloody work at Albuquerque,
Up in New Mexico.

The carbines sputtered once,
And the carbines stood at ease,
Watching the strife, of the Bowie knife,
With the mad, black batteries,—
The bomb's flash to the battle crash
Of the bellowing batteries.

Up to the crater's rim
Into the cannon's breath,
Silently, with the grim,
Blue blade of utter death,—
With the terrible light of the bare and bright
Blue blade of utter death.

Up from the sulphur mist,
Out from the crater's flame,
From the lion's lair, to the light and air
Of everlasting fame,—
To the mountain height, to the morning light,
Of everlasting fame!

Laurels for all who dare:
Laurels of greenest life,
For the brave to win and wear
With the terrible Bowie knife;—
In freedom's fight, with the deadly might
Of the terrible Bowie knife!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

CARRIER'S ADDRESS

To the patrons and friends of the Columbus *Enquirer*

WANTED—A Christmas carol,
For Christian souls to sing;
Short, sweet, with a Godly moral,
Bright as a humming-bird's wing.

To sing by the bier of the dead "old year,"
While the New Year's birth we wait;
With a bright career for your carrier,
In eighteen sixty-eight.

Lessons of deepest sorrow
Little our poet lacks;
Four years of a war's black horror,
Two of a ——— "cotton tax"!
Enough! from the rhymers' quiver
This moral at once climbs o'er—
"Charity," *now* or *never*!
Now "Honest" or—nevermore!

Stand fast by the cloudless splendor
Of your father's ancient fame!
Sons of the true and tender,
Heirs of the Saxon name!
We can die! but we cannot surrender
One ray of that ancient fame!

Was it dark on the hills of Judah?
Was it bleak where the shadows fell
On the stable, the stall, the manger,
The couch of Emmanuel?
Is your cradle of sorrow ruder
Than any in Israel?—

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Than theirs by the rushing Tiber?
Than his in old Egypt's reeds?—
In hardness, only and ever,
The sinew of empire breeds;
This stands in the world forever,
The first and the last of the creeds!

Stand fast by the cloudless splendor
Of your fathers' faith and fame!
Walk still with the true and tender
Of the Anglo-Saxon name.
And truth shall arise and render
Her wreath, at last, to your claim.

Though the darkness of desolation
Comes close to each home and heart,
Though the "Raven" retains his station,
And his shadow will not depart—
His burthen of life is lightest
Who stoutly accepts the past,
Yet lives in the hopes of the brightest,
And "works" for the *best* till the last!

In the which hope, (as Shakespeare
Says in his cunningest play)
We wish you as happy a New Year
As you make our Christmas to-day.

1868

HIS STYLE

Rather obscure! a failing sure
To follow life's observation!
Survey it all, and your thoughts shall fall
In the strangest concatenation.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

At dawn a glimpse of the shining fields,
At even the day's disaster—
And the verdure fails and the sunlight yields
To the tempest that tramples faster.

Your thoughts are a wreath of the rosiest girls!
Your lyrics their rippling laughter!
Radiant! never a shrouded tear,
Nor a moan, nor a silence after.

Shine on! and suffer his style grow dim—
"Quaint," as you kindly rank it,
Who sings to the shadows that sit with him
In pearls at his vesper banquet.

Nor a skeleton feast, in the dreamy mist,
Where he gathers his broken splendor,
There is bread, I wis, and wine to kiss
To memories shy and tender.

A little dark! let the smile shine through
His tears by the solemn river;
Like the light that summons a drop of dew
To shine with the stars forever.

HANCOCK

(A FRAGMENT)

It may have been observed that the first and by far the boldest signature to the Declaration of Independence is that of Hancock.

Bold and bright in the dawning light
Of freedom's declaration!
Brightest yet when the sun hath set
On Freedom's desolation!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

As the starry-souled of the great of old,
Dead in their generation,
Arose to shine o'er the land's decline,
In Heaven a constellation!

POOR TOM

"A' COLD"

True, Oh! King!

Years of his freedom—two!
And a shivering phantom stands,
With the firelight flickering through
His gaunt and wasted hands.
"Home"—and he bowed his head
With a low and wailing cry;
Ah! not for shelter, and not for bread,
Only a place to—die.

To die at the master's feet,
Out of the scourging storm,
Where the winds might never beat,
Where Tom lay ever warm;
Till Freedom the pitiless
Fell from th' eternal sky,
And the bitterness of his nakedness
Made Tom so glad to—die.

Oh! had these arms the pith
Of just two years ago!
Wrecked in the wrestle with
Yon wilderness of woe!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Tom's love would bring the light
Back to the master's eye—
But the blood in his heart is cold to-night,
And he only comes to—die!

Was it ever so many years,
Or only yesterday,
That master, among the peers,
Went bravest with Tom the gay?
Before the "locust" and "hail,"
Or only an hour gone by,
That freedom fell with a flail
On Tom, and made him die.

Of the dear old days so sweet
Does master dream as he sits,
Till the weariness of his feet
Seems wandering in his wits;
Till yesterday seemed so dim,
And the far away so nigh,
That his head goes all a-swim,
And his heart is fain to die!

Poor Tom! For a hundred years
Your blood has coursed by mine;
Were there warmth in bitter tears,
There should not lack the brine.
Dying! I know it well,
As I know the signs on high,
The tokens that grimly tell
Out of the storm 'twere well,
Both of us, Tom, to die.

December, 1867

TICKNOR'S POEMS

THE CONSTITUTION

"Le Roi Est Mort!"

"Awake the King!" the warder said;
"The night is passed, the tempest fled.
Awake the King; the world would shine
Once more beneath his eyes benign.

"The storm that rocked our castle's base
Brought heavy slumber to his Grace,
And light and peace and laughing skies
Shall wake him"—when the dead arise.

Ah! deadlier than the tempest's peal,
In coward hands the traitor steel!
The Lord's anointed they that cried
"All hail!" have smitten, that he died.

They drank his cup, they brake his bread,
And in his slumber smote him dead,—
His loyal lords!—to bear through time
The crimson of that banner crime!

On him all sacred seals were set;
In him all power and mercy met;
Dead! and what kings shall rise and reign
Ere we behold his like again!

THE HIELAND LASS AT LUCKNOW

"Dinna ye hear the pibroch?"

Not alone, not alone, upon Lucknow's moan
The midnight of blackness fell;
Not alone, not alone, by her shattered stone
Stood Sorrow, the sentinel.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Not a heart but beat to her watcher's feet,
Under that awful sky,
And ne'er a hearth on the darkened earth
But blazed at the slogan's cry.

For the Campbells came like the rush of flame,
With that clamor so wild and high,
That its clarion breath in the ears of Death
Might have trembled with victory.
Here's a brimming can to the Highland-man,
And the Bengal bolt he hurled!
Here's a brimming glass to the Hieland lass
Who echoed it round the world!

"HONOR THE BRAVE"

Up in the Indian hills
Of the Cutchee tribe 'tis said
That when a chieftain dies
They bind his wrists with thread:
Blue for the very brave;
But for the bravest red.

One time in Indian wars
A squad of Englishmen
Charged sixty Cutcheears
So valiantly that, when
The fight was done, of ten, not one
Ever came back again.

Long after, when the winds
Their skeletons had kissed,
A squad of Englishmen
Looked up their missing list,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And found them dead, with each a thread
Of scarlet on his wrist.

Should "North" require a sign
In honor of her dead
Who bravely stayed behind
When all the others fled,—
We can supply the proper dye
And "throw her in the thread."

TO CONGRESS

The Memorial of Thomas Grubb

Lords of this United Nation,
Hear the earnest supplication
Of your very humble sub-
Scriber, starving Thomas Grubb!

Tax this cotton! Tax it high,
Tax it dead, before we die!
Tax the planter, tax the land,
Overseer and the hand;
Screw and gin-house, gin and band!

Tax the mule and tax the plow,
Everywhere and any-how!
Tax it top, and tax it tap,
Upper, middle, bottom crap!

Tax the lint and tax the seed,
Tax the universal weed!
Tax the very bumble-bees
In the blossoms; tax 'em, please!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Lay a double premium
On the boll-and-army—"wum!"
And a double bounty set
On rust and rot and drouth and wet.

Tax it! Tax it! don't relax it—
Chain it, stamp it, d——n it, tax it!
Tax it deaf and dumb and blind—
Out of sight and out of mind!

Then the South shall shine again
With her grain and grasses!—then
For your grandeurs, night and day,
Your petitioner shall pray.

January 1, 1868

THE GUNBOAT

Build the gunboat! Let her be
Georgia's symbol on the sea!
Georgia's daughter, fair and free,
Sword and shield of liberty.

Swift destruction at her keel;
Triumph in her battle-peal;
Heart of oak, and ribs of steel;
Honor helmsman at her wheel.

Build the gunboat! Georgia craves
Memorial for her fallen braves;
A monument for many graves—
Give the gunboat to the waves.

They shall rise and fight anew,
The dead among the living crew!
Let our gunboat breast the blue,
A fortress and a temple too!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

ÆSOP AGAIN

A parable to prove it true,
Old wisdom is as good as new.

A Lamb one morning, on the brink
Of a brooklet, stooped to drink.

A Wolf, above, on mutton bent,
Assailed that hapless innocent.

"Vilest of varlets, dare you dream,
The while I drink, to rile the stream?"

Quoth Lamb, "How can I rile it, till
The stream you mention runs up hill?"

"Ha, caitiff! by your speech I know
You bit my father years ago!"

"How could I bite him?" Lamb replied,
"Ere I was born your father died."

"Base miscreant! you mean I lie!
Now one or both of us must die!"

The Lambkin died, no doubt, but I've
A "notion" that the Wolf's alive!

And Logic, with a Lamb in sight,
Doth not impair his appetite.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

BABY'S POEM

Evelyn Page Carter

I wonder where the fairies get
All those pretty things, my pet,
In pink, and pearl, and violet!

Coming like the honey-bees,
Bringing from the summer seas
The coral and the spiceries!

Out of what peculiar clay
Do they dig these dimples, say!
Dig more dimples in a day
Than a week could kiss away.

That must be a distaff rare
That can spin this sort of hair,
Sun-lit silk and—none to spare!

What old dainty brownie in
Her benevolence has been
"Illuminating" baby's skin

With these veinlets like a vine,
Traced in violet of wine
On vellum of a nectarine?

Bless you, Brownie! never let
Your cradle-charities upset—
There are "orders" for you yet!

"Eyes like these!—and lips like those!—
A little straighter in the nose!—
Less of pink and more of rose!"

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Time to stop him!—here's a quiz,
Thinks he's wiser than he is,
Teaching fairyland its "biz"!

"DIOGENES"

With a New Light

He may have been a worthy wight
Who mocked the sun with candle-light,

As seeking in that foolish way,
An honest man in open day;

But who has heard of one of these
Revealed unto Diogenes?

I think his lanthorn lacked alone
Some honest motions of his own!

The man with little love shall find
But little loving in mankind!

And one of feeble honor can
By no means find an honest man!

To win the Indies' wealth, lay out
The Indies' worth, or thereabout.

AGONISTES

Between the pillars let him stand !
The fireless eyes, the fettered hand,
The Lion-Fox that vexed the land !

By Baal ! but the sport was rare
To take the cunning in our snare,
The Lion, by his yellow hair !

The world grows weary of the jest,
And there are shadows in the west ;
Between the pillars let him rest !

Perhaps to dream, as captives will,
That on Philistia's sacred hill
His feet of triumph trample still.

To-morrow,—be the darkness short !—
Refreshed in rage, our gentle court
Shall bait the Titan for our sport !

So peace, from pinnacle to porch,
With naked bone or blazing torch
Never more to smite or scorch !

And there was peace ; and we have read
The simple prayer the captive said,
The blind man as he bowed his head ;

And when the voice of other wail
Is still in story, let the tale
Of Agonistes turn us pale.

"BARRY" OF SAINT BERNARD

Twelve thousand feet straight up the sky!
Six thousand years of sleet!
Strange eyrie of humanity,
With Europe at its feet!

How many a year the glacier,
Slow gliding, shall not tell,
Since storms that launch the avalanche
Have shouted as it fell.
Their records rest in cloven crest
And splintered pinnacle.

How many years, in deadliest wrath
Of Roman and of Frank,
The red high-tide of murder hath
Smitten this mountain's flank!

And this poor dog, his kennel ice,
Ringed by the double strife,
In his sublime self-sacrifice
Stands staunch for human life!

Lead out your kings! an even start
For Glory's last reward!
Your Hannibal, your Bonaparte,
Your Caesar, evil-starred,
And here's my "vote," with all my heart,
For "Barry" of Bernard.

Climb the fierce legions as of old
Storm swept and battle riven!
And as the foremost hearts fall cold
The Alps, by all their height, uphold
A dog the nearest Heaven!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

FABLE

Not in Æsop

Twin Buckets there lived in a well.
This is their parable.

Said the one, as he downward went,
With a rattle of discontent :

"What folly ! drawn full to the top,
Returning with never a drop."

Quoth his mate, coming skyward, "Why, nay !
I see it another way.

"However thirsty we sink,
We rise with a plenty to drink !"

Life's tapestry's woven so that it
Shines just as you choose to look at it,

And responds, as your wisdom hath struck it,
Like a full or an empty bucket !

THE SPHINX

The Sphinx by the desert stands,
Lord of the lonely lands,
With the dust of the desert sands
On its head, and its heart, and its hands.

Ages before the flood,
Ere the delta grew out of the mud,
Up to its knees it stood
In a deluge of tears and blood !

TICKNOR'S POEMS

The desert was out of sight
When the creature was dragged to light,
Out of the caves of night,
And the desert was puzzled quite.

'Twas a riddle they used to tell
At the digging of Joseph's well,
Ere the scourge of the Pharaohs fell
On the shoulders of Israel!

And there's never a star that winks
On Africa as it sinks
But wonders whenever it thinks
Of the world and its wonderful sphinx.

And there's nothing by land or sea
Can ever expect to be
Such an ugly old puzzle as he
Except old Tyranny.

A riddle to rest unread
Till the Pharaohs are dead,
Till the people shall toil for bread,
And not for a stone instead.

MAY QUEEN

To Queen Victoria

HERALD

A Queen elect! and Loyalty again
Wakes like a blossom to the summer rain!
Defiled how long! in dust and darkness hid;
As dead as Cheops in his pyramid!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Kings in their time and demagogues to-day,
Baser than swine, have cast that pearl away!
Yet Spring returns, and Loyalty again
Feels the old rapture kindling in each vein;
Biding its time, as Heaven ordains the hours,
It waits to crown the worthiest with flowers.

CROWN

Queen of a proud and immemorial line,
Upon thy head what sacred dew should shine!
Heir to long annals where no stain appears,
The thousandth rosebud of a thousand years!
With this fair Crown what fragrant memories shed
The bloom and balm of ages on thy head!

SCEPTRE

A thornless Crown! a Sceptre without stain!
Peace in thy path and honor in thy train!
So rule thy realm that when these wreaths decay
And the poor robes of office pass away
Thy brow may bear more brightly than to-day
A Crown with Christ in Heaven's eternal May.

QUEEN

Amen! and Heaven support me too!
'Tis much we mighty people must go through!
In mine exchequer not a sovran cent—
As poor in purse as a church-mouse in Lent;
Not a bright bayonet to back my will,
Not one black bomb to whistle "Love me still"!
I couldn't tax you were I so inclined;
Not even hang you if I had a mind.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

I know no art in politics to shine,
To prove black "white," and all your nice things
mine!

What shall I do to keep your minds in awe?
Where shall I seek a substitute for law?

Queens there have been—and oh, what blood and
tears

Bear their pale memories down the tide of years!

And Kings, how many! duly born to rule,

And duly dead, epitomized "a fool!"

Kind spirits, guide me for mine empire's ease,

Nor let me live or die like one of these.

Sweet Sisters, help me, as such sisters can,

To try hard loving for my regal plan,

And if we fail, then count me crowned to-day

The most unhappy of the Queens of May.

MAIDS

SPRING

Love tarries for love! Lo! the chrysalis' wing
And the bloom in the bud, how they welcome the
Spring!

SUMMER

Love kindles to love! Lo! the birds and the flowers
That blossom and sing to my sun and my showers!

AUTUMN

Love ripens to love! Lo! my touches unfold
From the heart of the flowret the harvest of gold!

WINTER

Let the Summer decay, and the Autumn expire!
Lo! Love at the hearth is a log on the fire!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

CHORUS

Rule by love! and round the year
Flowers shall follow thee as here.
Spring with wreaths and incense rare—
Summer with her robes so fair—
Autumn with his golden store—
Winter, kindest at core—
More than these shall bless thy sway,
Happy Queen of more than May!

MODERN MINSTRELSY

Inscribed to Miss S. R. B.

The lute and lance of the old Romance
Are dead an age before us;
The lute is dust, the lance is rust,
And neither now can bore us.

And never more shall troubadour
His knightly lays be singing,
For lance and lute alike are mute
Before the rifles ringing.

While brassy throats with iron notes
Their compliments are flinging,
A rifle gun does up in one
Our fighting and our singing.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

SHOVEL AND TONGS

Here's a war that comes nigh to you, neighbor,
Comes nigh to you, person and pelf,
To crook your old scythe to a sabre,
And also to straighten yourself.
A war where the right is to settle
The score of a century's wrongs,
For the women, if we lack the metal,
To win, with their—shovel and tongs!

Yes, women! from Jephtha's fair daughter,
To her of the hammer and nail,
Instructed in love and in slaughter,
To finish and never to fail.
Here's a chance for a hero to render
His valor a theme for our songs,
To fight till the women surrender,
While a fireside needs a de-fender,
Or furnishes shovel and tongs.

TO DR. HOLLAND, ON READING
"KATHRINA"

God's tender gospel! Lacks it still
Memorial? Lo! a miracle!

New England blossoms! far hath come
The wafture of that rare perfume—

Right under Edward's heels! a man
And very brother!—Jonathan!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Who clasped all virtues in a—vice;
Whose hate was flame, whose love was ice,
Whose whole evangel—sacrifice!

Who blamed high Heaven, the good-dis-
penser,
And hell, as quite too small a censer

For him to swing! the (self-) “elect,”
High-priest—head-devil of his sect,

How many tortured souls to-day,
Flayed through the fire, to Baal say:

Pass, brimstone! and Kathrina rise,
Christ's pitying mercy in thine eyes.

Cool, cauldron! let the blasted heath
Taste of the summer in her breath!

Vanish the witches! Night, unbar
Before these feet whose shinings are
At once of lily and of star.

Only tried manhood may express
True woman's tireless tenderness;

And had these wishes wings of flight
Beyond this wizard-haunted night,

In blessings on the tried and true,
Dear Doctor, they should “light on you.”

TICKNOR'S POEMS

OLD BRASS

To the women who melted fenders, etc., for cannon

Old brass! Why, it burns with a glory
Of carbuncles, diamonds, pearls;
With the very crown jewels of story
Enwreathed with the tresses of girls!
The mail of the maiden Joanna;
Cornelia's pure fireside fame;
Lucrece with her white soul of honor,
La Motte with her arrows of flame.

Old brass! it is bright with the splendor
Of its manhood's loftiest day,
With the proud eye of Judith; the slender
Swift fingers of Charlotte Corday;
With the flash of the far-away cymbals
When Miriam sang by the sea!
Old brass! Why, it twinkles and trembles
With the swords and the songs of the free.

March 28, 1862

"McHENRY"

Oh, hark! can you hear through the midnight a cry?
The captive's low wail from McHenry's prison!
Though the dungeon be deep and the battlements
high,
The manacle's bolt, it hath burst—and arisen.
It hath "gone up on high," it hath climbed to the sky;
It hath crept into heaven; it never shall die
While a stripe of the despots' black banner shall wave
O'er the limbs of the free and the hearts of the
brave.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Whenever, oh, freemen, that murmur awakes,
Then, wake ye and rise, there is death in slumbers;
Be the echo ye yield as the tempest that shakes
A continent's width, with a continent's numbers!
Ye have blood to be stirred! let it leap to the word,
That shouts with the trumpet and shines with the
sword
While a stripe of the despots' black banner shall wave
O'er the limbs of the free, o'er the hearts of the
brave.

Oh! swift be the sword, in the day of its wrath,
To cleave the dark walls of yon dungeon asunder;
When the captive's appeal shall return on its path
With the lightning's red flash and the leaping of
thunder;
For the judgment is set, for the storm-clouds are met,
And the vengeance that lingers shall never forget,
While a stripe of the despots' black banner shall wave
O'er the limbs of the free, o'er the hearts of the
brave.

THE UNITY OF THE RACES

Are black and white of kith and kin?
The same or the reverse, sir?
In heel and shin and wool and skin
A unit, or diverse, sir?

And what's a hybrid, if I may
Request an explanation?
About the poorest thing to pay
That's known to speculation;

TICKNOR'S POEMS

The lowest speed, the loudest bray,
That ever shocked creation,
A yaller dog that has his day
But not his generation.*

Until the smiling heavens make
Five senses all to blunder,
It were as well for conscience' sake
To keep the breeds asunder.

And lest philanthropy should swim
Through blood for "Cuffee's" fetter,
We'll do the best we can for him
Until we can do better.

THE OLD PEACH TREE, WITH A MORAL

That old unsightly tree,
What moral might it teach,
When it lately tendered me
A melancholy peach!

Its roots in rifted clay,
Its trunk to worm and sun;
Blown down and washed away,
Yet strangely living on.

The very utmost crest
Of that unshadowed hill,
And not, from east to west,
A rival pinnacle!

*Ye mule and ye mulatto, if confined to a separate continent, would speedily depopulate it.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Beside a cabin, all
As mouldered as itself,
With weeds upon the wall
And a "May-pop" on the shelf.

Of man, or beast, the sole
Successful speculation;
The harvest of a whole
Plantation's desolation!

What moral might it teach,
That old unsightly tree,
As it tendered me a peach,
Acidulous, tho' free!

'Twas thus the peach-tree said:
"Oh, stranger, tell me why,
If this old peach ain't dead,
A peach should ever die?"
But I only shook my head,
And only answered, "Why!"

YE LITTLE TREE

Take it up tenderly,
Plant it with care;
It's but a little tree,
Nothing to spare.
Scant are the limbs on't,
Fibers but few,
Take care, or it won't
Take care of you.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Mangle the bark of it,
Man without soul;
Pestle the roots of it
Into a hole.
Oh, for the shame of it,
Better be dead;
Fruit to the name of it,
Nary a red!

Take it up tenderly,
Man with a soul;
Oh! but a little tree
Likes a big hole.
Fair is the sight of it,
Lordly and bold;
Fruit on the limbs of it
Crimson and gold!

Who'd be a market-man
Selling his fruit,
Gum in his eye and
A worm at his root?
Down with the raw-bone,
Shriveled and dry!
Juice for my jaw-bone!
Joy for my eye!

Basket on basketful,
Peach upon peach;
Juno-like, beautiful,
Rosy and rich.
Choose for the good of you
Orchardists, each;
Dollar a load, of you,
Dollar a peach.

TO THE CHOIR

On his departure for the North in 1841

Our Frank is gone, that nice young man,
We ne'er shall see him more;
He wore his collar upside down
And buttoned it before.

His soul was tuned to music sweet,
Although he could not sing;
He wore his shoes upon his feet
And tied them with a string.

Of all the youths the world e'er saw
He surely was the best;
His hat was made of Leghorn straw
And satin was his vest.

The "stops" would say if they could speak,
His like was never seen;
He wore his gray coat all the week,
And Sunday wore his green.

The "swells" shall long remember him
With fond affection too;
His hair was rather brown than black,
His eyes were grayish blue.

And all the ladies of the choir
For him had set their caps,—
He wore his breeches very loose
And always hated straps.

But now he's gone, that nice young man,
Oh, who can fill his place!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

For who can pull the organ stops
With such "exquisite grace."

But wheresoever be his lot,
His fate, to sink or swim,
His name shall never be forgot
While we remember him.

A HISTORY OF THE CHOIR, OR, WHAT'S
IN A NAME?

Should all the goddesses of old
Now meet as they are wont,
They'd shortly find to their dismay
That they had lost their count,—
For Dian's left the Elysian fields
And come on earth to *Hunt*.

And should Apollo angry be
And follow her, why then, sir,
I'd make him dress as mortals do,
And fit him with a *Spencer*.

Old Time had stopped in his fell career,
And his scythe on the willows hung,
And he'll go away with a flea in his ear
From one who shall ever be *Young*.

But gods and goddesses are sca'ce
In a wicked world like this,
For truly earth is far too base
For such exquisite *Bliss*.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

But should Dan Cupid, naked come
And anyone deride him,
We'd take the little rascal in
And find a place to *Hyde* him.

And last, not least, that man must meet
Much favor in our eyes
Who with a disposition sweet
Is good as he is *Wise*.

But surely it is very wrong
To make such rhymes in church,
And so I'll loose my fiddle strings
And come down from my *Perch*.

1840

"LITTLE ROSE"

No poem

"Fee, fo, fum! my poem's come!"
I wonder how she knew it!
"And here's your paper, pen and—I—
Want to see you 'do it'!"

Oh, pallid paper, tintless ink!
And steel of the untender!
How can a little lyric think
Itself a thing of splendor!

My little rune against a June
Of dimples and rose-blushes!
Ah, when the daylight drowns the moon
The skylark hides and hushes!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Now, *will* you close your eyes, my Rose,
And hold your blushes steady,
And here my dazzled "Idyl" goes
To—dimple-smash a'ready!

Am I a tropic traveller
To "book" my summer sheaves;
To mock my bright "equator," here
With skeletons of leaves!

Nay, blush and dimple as you will,
To overtake or vary
Thy lyric-self, my little elf,
Is past all "stationery!"

I'll write your rhyme another time,
By some gray spectre haunted!
But summer-time! Oh, princess! I'm
Idyl-dumb!—"enchanted!"

TO A VERY BEAUTIFUL OLD LADY

(Maria Byrd)

Yea! many songs of many Mays
Our little nest has heard;
But none were sweeter than the lays
Of this old mother bird!

And when the world is withered dry
To its profoundest glen,
We'll seek her soul of Eden; aye,
Begin the world again.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

THE BUMBLE BEE

In the White Macartney Rose.

Mr. Burke: Children who have occasion to pass by a hedge of the Cherokee—"White Macartney"—Rose will hardly fail to find the lesson which the bumble bee exposes so widely in the prosecution of his labor. He not only "sings at his work," he dances! As though the "pollen" which impregnates the flower had diffused through himself a delirium of delight, he fairly rolls over with ecstasy! In fact, he "carries on" after a fashion that plain prose has no idea of how to do justice to; and even poetry, if it were read over to him, would, I am afraid, elicit only a contemptuous "hum! Paint my felicity? H-U-M-M!"—THE BEE AND HIS BUSINESS.

Since Solomon the king,
Since eggs were voted eggs,
I have not seen a thing
So happy in the legs,
So busy on the wing,
So merry in the legs!

So merry and so wise—
And both at once, all over,
Like one whose duty lies
With his delight, in clover!
Who loads his happy thighs
With gold, by rolling over,
Who sees his fortune rise
By rolling, rolling over

In some great orchard! Which
Should cause it come to pass
A man grew fat and rich
By rolling in the grass—
By nibbling at a peach
And rolling in the grass!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

THE OPALET

Shall I sing, my pet, of the opalet—
Wonderful creature, he!
Right exquisite, with his petals bright,
Blossoming down in the sea.

Couleur de rose, as the iris glows
In the blue where the rain mists be,
Lovelier yet, the opalet
Shines in the azure sea.
Satin and rose, as he glows and grows,
Blossoming down in the sea.

I bid ye beware of a cruel snare,
Oh, fish of the foolish fin;
For the opalet is a host, you bet,
In the science of "take you in."

But he's tied, my own, to a coral stone,
And he can't come out of the sea,
And I hardly think, if we let him alone,
He'll lunch upon you and T.

THE MARMOT'S HARVEST HOME

From a Sketch in Burke's Weekly

If you haven't heard, you can hardly tell
The marmot's way
Of hauling hay
To his hole, to his house, to his home, his—well,
Wink if you will and say—his "cell!"

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Flat of his back, with his legs on end,
Like a fodder-frame, as you comprehend,
Stiff as sticks; while a marmot friend
Piles him high with the fragrant stuff,
Packs him down with a "quantum suff,"
Till the under marmot hollers "enough!"

Then four marmots, all in a row,
Haul him by the tail, you know,
To his hole, his house, his home, his—well,
Quite excusable—say his "sell!"

You don't believe it? There may be some
They don't invite to their harvest home;
But I believe it! and here I say
That never since marmots have gathered hay
Did your Doctor meet 'em, by night or day,
Hauling it home another way.

TWENTY-SIXTH OF APRIL

The first day of the week.—ST. LUKE xxiv: 1

No wreath of roses, no breath of spice,
The Women may weep alone!
While the sepulchre holds the sacrifice,
And there's none to move the stone!

A little pebble from Plymouth Rock,
To roll to a boulder *one* day,
When a fine morality shuns the shock
Of—loving your dead on Sunday!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And yet how sacred that holy day
Which sees all souls unite,
When none shall number the hearts that say
"Our Father," nor challenge the lips that pray
As Gentile or Israelite!

The holiest day for the holiest deed
That ever the earth hath known;
Oh, darkened hearts of our sunny land,
This day for the dead—if the angel hand
Shall roll away the stone.

SYMBIE—A LEGEND

"Symbie?" Symbie! comical name!
What comical thing can wear it?
A child of mirth, of the air or earth,
Or a diabolical spirit?
Not a fairy bright, not a ghost in white,
Not a demon, though very near it.
"Symbie!" whatever the tale be worth,
Listen, and you shall hear it.

In the lonely lands of the long-leaf pine,
Of the odorous balsam smelling,
Where the Tar-Heel gathers the turpentine
That he gathers a name by selling,
There are little fountains that dimple and shine,
And these are the Symbie's dwelling.
There are fishes that swim in the fount with him,
The perch, the roach, and the trout so trim,
The sucker sedate, and the goggled-eyed "brim,"
Can vouch for the *story* I'm telling.

A grizzled and tan old fisherman,
For a goblin so gay and so frisky,
His fishing line is a bolus vine,—
Bullace, you call it? or Muscadine,—
And his bait is a bottle of whisky.

And woe to the wight who comes by night
To the fount of the misty curtain,
For the Symbie, straight, lets down his bait,
And catches a gudgeon certain,
And the gudgeon sees strange mysteries
Under the misty curtain.

Glitter of silver and glimmer of gold
Gleam on his reeling vision,
Sparkle of gems and the manifold
Glory of lights Elysian :
Till there comes the touch of a hand so cold
And scatters the golden vision,
And only the hook of the fisher-spook
Abides with the fiend's derision.

And the serpents hiss and the lizards wink
To the frog and her little daughter,
And all together ascend the brink
Of the Symbie's enchanted water.
They wheeze, and whistle, and chatter, and chink,
"Symbie! Symbie! what do you think!"
"Symbie! Symbie! nibble and drink;"
"Drunk! and fell in the water!"

Never doubt that my *story* is true,—
Only too mild I draw it,
For I saw the freedman that said he knew
The "nigger" that said he saw it.

THE BALL

And who was there*

The Devil cocked his chapeau,—
He looked a little pale,—
But he hid his hoofs in gaiters,
And tucked away his tail;
For he had been invited
To the Doodle's quiet drum,
In a little note, indited
By "Mrs. D. to hum."
The Devil tapped his snuff-box
And grew a little grum,
But only said, "Delighted,"
And, also, "Bound to come!"

There was cooking in the kitchen,
There was feasting in the hall,
For the beautiful, bewitching
Mrs. Doodle gave a ball!
The wines were of the rarest
The Doodles ever stored,
The women just the fairest
The climate could afford;
The lights were redly glancing,
And the White House all abloom,
With the damsels dancing, dancing,
On the very crack of doom!
And the Devil tapped his snuff-box,
But it answered with a Boom!

Oh, their limbs were ruby-clotted,
And the "cutty sarks" they wore
Were sprinkled, spattered, spotted,
Splashed and stained with gore!

*Congress during the Reconstruction period.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Such a clatter, clack, and clamor,
And the room so reeking full
That Death could hardly hammer
With his cross-bones on a skull!
And the Devil beamed his sweetest
On the damsels in the room,
And gently tapped his snuff-box,
But still it muttered Boom!

UNDER GROUND

March 4, 1869

Congress during the Reconstruction period

Satan sat in his parlor snug
On a coil of his own dear tail,
With a brimstone pipe and a mighty mug
Of regular home-brewed ale.

Handsome, wasn't he? Who would hint
Of the gentleman in the chair
Otherwise? Since the Devil must print
Whatever is written here!

His eyes were bright as a blaze of fire,
And his brows were black above 'em;
And his face was big as a Yankee bomb
When the Doodles made us love 'em.

He sat at work; for he keeps no clerk,
And trusts to no attorney;
Though he keeps a place at his desk, in case
Of a sudden run, for Forney.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

"Confound these Doodles!" the Devil said,
As he stuck in his multiplication,
"Their very names are enough to shed
A stench on their generation!"

"There's Greeley, and Beecher, and Weed—a flower!
Brown, Brownlow, and, let me think—
Change the name and no skunk as sour
Could possibly ever stink."

They keep old Lucifer taxed of late
To the double in pen and ink:—
It's scribble and cipher and fumigate,
And still they come and stink,
Till the Devil can hardly calculate
"What next," with a nod and a drink.

Twenty times six is—the River Styx!
What's happened in Congress now?
Are they coming through with their hullabaloo?—
Such an infernal row!

"Ho, Asmodeus! bar the door
With a red-hot poker, do!
Some extra Doodle has got the floor,
And I fear he will tumble through!"

"Send an imp, if you have one cool,
And tell him to wait till wanted;
He must go round if he is a fool,
There's no through tickets—Granted.

"I thought the Johnnies had taught him as much
Whenever he dared to attack 'em!
Their Robert Lee (Diable!) met him never with such
A Grand Army of Bummers to back him.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

"Darn these Doodles! again I say,
The butcherly sons of thunder!
Fuming hell in this sort of a way—
Asmodeus, stand from under!"

I heard a crash! and I saw a spout
Of flame through the sulphured smoke!
The Capitol sunk till its dome stuck out,
And the woman on top shook her cap, with a shout!
And—luckily I awoke!

TWO MILLION PILLS PER DIEM

(Turned Out at a Single Northern "Pill-ery")

Two million pills a day! and yet
(Though people daily die)
The rogues do flourish rich and great,
And fools do multiply—
The two great pill-ars of the State
Stand prominent and high,

Two million pills! a month's supply,
If all arranged in boxes,
Would equal the Equator; aye,
And both the Equinoxes!

Two million pills in single file
Would over-run the cable,
And rounded up, might go its pile
Against the tower of Babel!

Enough to turn the planets pale,
To heave the ocean dry,
And crook the very comet's tail
With perfect agony!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And oh, my countrymen! the ills
Your heedless stomachs dash on
Might melt the makers of those pills
To bowels of compassion.

And could I cure you of the curse,
With "learned skill," I'd cull
And give you in one fragrant verse
The "pill receipt" in full.

Of rhubarb, aloes, jalap, just
As much as may suffice,
With hydrargyrum, and a dust
Of powdered liquorice.

Then soap enough to make it stiff,
And from a tower so tall
The pills are pestled through a sieve,
And rounded as they fall
Like shot, my fellow countrymen,
And yet you take them all!

MEMORIAL AND RELIGIOUS
POEMS

MEMORIAL AND RELIGIOUS POEMS

IN MEMORIAM

Thomas Maduit Nelson, aetat 71

They fail from council and from camp, they are
falling one by one,
Those grand old heroes of the stamp of God-loved
Washington;
The task is wrought of mighty minds, their glorious
day is done,
And Freedom mourns a faded star with every setting
sun.

The kingly brow, the kindly hand, the proud and stal-
wart form
That stood the beacon of the might, the bulwark of
the storm—
How few and far on Glory's slope their lessening
numbers stand,
"The pillars of a people's hope," the Titans of the
land.

The mould is broken; here no more those regal
souls we meet
We kept their honor, tho' the world had rocked be-
neath their feet;
The calm, clear dignity that shone no clearer for
renown;
The matchless majesty that won, but would not wear
a crown.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Ah! when descends the sullen night of freedom's
darkest hour,
When demagogue and parasite defile the seats of
power,
When dust is on the eagle's crest, and stain on stripe
and star,
Ah! who shall fill their robes in peace, or lift their
swords in war?

One more to that immortal band, that long illustrious
line,
That counts no nobler name, old friend, or purer
soul than thine;
Yea, with the mighty in their death, their rest, and
their reward,
Sleep, in thy cloudless fame and faith, true soldier
of the Lord.

Sleep with the mighty in thy death! yet not with these
alone;
Sleep with the loving hearts that beat so truly to
thine own;
Sleep with the sword-cross on thy breast, the well-
worn scabbard by,
Fit symbols of a soldier's rest and his reward on high.

SANS CHANGE

From the Seal-Ring of Bishop Beckwith

An earl of England hath a crest
An infant in an eagle's nest;

And (hid to heraldry) the strange
Yet simple legend, "Without change."

TICKNOR'S POEMS

No herald, yet I hold amiss
The reading that traverses this.

No doubt the eagle caught away
The infant from its nurse that day,

And felt new softness at the touch,
Pervade his fiery spirit; much

As might the lion that relents,
A lamb, to Una's innocence.

And well, methinks, the nursling might
From the stern rapture of that flight

Some token of the eyrie bring
In dauntless eye and tireless wing;

And so through annals richly stored,
Of gown, of miter, and of sword,

Transmit, unchanged, to all his race
The eagle's fire, the infant's grace.

YE REDBREAST AT CALVARY

To Paul H. Hayne, "Chief Singer"

'Twas but one thorn I might untwine
From all that agony!—
Yet I shall wear the rosy sign—
The red-cross of his smile divine
Upon me till I die!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

So to the land where angels sing
Thy lyre from earth may bear
A rapture on each radiant string
For every pang thy song or wing
Has soothed or shadowed there!

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF JOHN
BETHUNE

Thoir fa'near an duine foirfe agus amhaire air an duine
iouraic; oir is i sith a's crìoch do'n duine fin.—PSALM
xxxvii.

Sounds from an unforgotten shore
And well remembered seas,
Wail of the waves that break and roar
Around the Hebrides!
Come with your low and solemn tread
And long, unmeasured roll,
Breathe for a dirge above the dead
The music of his soul!

Murmurs of that old Gaelic speech
From islands far away,
With your last echoes rise and reach
His parting soul to-day!
Dead hero! on whose brow appears,
In green immortal youth,
The laurel of a hundred years
Of constancy and truth!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

CHARLES J. JENKINS

Governor of Georgia during Reconstruction period. Removed from office by Federal military authority

Worthiest! In whom we trace
The manhood and the matchless grace
Of him, the foremost gentleman
Of all his age and all his race,*

Our Georgian!

How from his grave the pure and grand
Old Oglethorpe would clasp thy hand
Across the centuries. How smile
In those true eyes that guard the while
His State from plunder and the torch—
Watching from pinnacle to porch.
From broad foundation to the height
Of *her* last keystone, where we write
Thy name among the chiefest great!
The wise—the just—the moderate—
The treble pillar of the State!

IN MEMORY

Death's silence—for the angel's hymn
Awaits a shrouded hearth!
Death's darkness! for the heavens are dim
Without a "night" on earth!

We sow in tears; bring Grief our gain
In God's good season, blest;
Bring, scattered bloom, the golden grain
And toil, our time of rest!

*Witness: Johnson, Burke, Goldsmith, Hannah Moore, the king, queen, court and council, and all the lights of his age.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

And cannot we, as we number o'er
Our saintly treasures riven,—
Without their brightness gone before
How distant still were Heaven!

IN MEMORY OF A LITTLE GIRL

And not without hope
Deep, deep in the choral dawning
Of a beautiful earth and skies
Our Lily came out of the morning,
Lily with violet eyes.

Only a star-beam's quiver,
The space that the spice-wind stirs—
Yet the faces were brightened forever
Once they had looked on hers!

And now that our wan eyes glisten,
Full front to the stars of "Rest"—
We kneel as at dawn, and listen,
The choral that comes from the west.

And the lingering clouds go drifted
Away on her angel breath—
The last of the shadows lifted
From thy valley of light, O Death!

OUR TREASURE IN HEAVEN

Sleep sweetly, gentle one,
Sleep till thy shrouded eyes
Shall waken 'mid the bowers of God,
Oh, bird of Paradise!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Oh, softest, gentlest hands
Did soothe thee to thy rest;
And the pure souls that welcomed thee
Were highest of the blest.

Often we'll call thy name,
And the pure joy it brings
Shall cheer us as the rustling sound
Of thy young seraph's wings.

The hosts that follow thee
To the pure throne of God
Shall find no shadow in the vale
Thy little feet have trod.

"THE CHILDREN THAT ARE NOT"

The children, the children that are not! Ah, why
From the ends of the earth swells that desolate cry?
Has the dull world a glory, the bright skies a gloom,
That a wail should arise at the gates of the tomb?

Ah! deem ye the sparrow its pathway may hold,
Yet a lamb of Christ's love be lost from His fold?
That the diamond's sparkle should never burn dim,
Yet a spirit be quenched that was kindled by Him?

Are the husbandman's tears with his toil in vain?
From the scattered seed shall there spring no grain?
Hath the chrysalis wings ere its shroud is wound?
Hath the violet breath in the dull cold ground?

Yea! bless ye, God, as ye bend above
The broken lilies of tears and love,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

That not without witness the hope was given
That a "little child" should be first in Heaven.

Ah! mighty the anguish, and many the tears
That must win for our spirits a glory like theirs
Unsinning—unsmitten! The children that trod
Through the lightness of earth to the wonders of
God.

Yea! bear them to rest 'mid the flowers that tell
Their Master's meaning so clear and well,
And know by their pathway an angel hath trod
From the brightness of earth to the bosom of God!

TORCH HILL,
March, 1865.

FAITH

Why sits pale Sorrow at the gate of Heaven,
With eyes so wan, such wild and haggard air,
As one whose woe with God's own arm had striven
And won the triumph of a wild despair?

Crouched where the shadow of the marble portal
Falls deep and deeper on her clouded eyes,
Speeding with wail and cry the feet immortal
That enter there the walks of Paradise!

Angel of Faith! shall sullen sorrow render
Thy smile a mockery to the hearts that mourn?
Deepen the gloom, yet not reveal the splendor
Where saints depart and seraphim are born?

Star of our souls! what other light shall linger
When on our hearts the tomb's dark shadow
falls,

If thou trace not with thy uplifted finger
The gathering glory on its inner walls?

And thou! on thine own gentle bosom blending
The broken lilies of our tears and love,
Lighten the pathway where our feet are tending,
Lengthen the cords that guide our hearts above!

TORCH HILL,
January, 1855.

THE CHILD AND THE CHURCHYARD CROSS

To little Katie, suggested by seeing her clasp the cross
erected on her mother's grave.

She twined her arms about the cross
And bowed her little head;
So clasp the only link between
Our sorrow and our dead.

The pure white marble felt her cheek
Cling with that mute caress
That mothers know; that may not speak
To other tenderness.

Yes, fold thy pinions round the cross,
Sweet dove, and feel no fear;
No note but one of tenderness
Shall ever meet thee here.

And from these mounds of sacred earth
Our sundered hearts between,
Draw thou the fragrance of their worth
To keep their memory green.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

It must have answered, for her smile
Grew as an angel's fair;
And soft hands, in a little while,
Laid little Katie there.

TORCH HILL,
Easter Sunday, 1858.

LITTLE KATIE

The lily we love, it is whiter
For the darkness that covers the day;
The pearl of our souls, it is brighter
For the shadows that turn to gray.

To the sunlight that calls, its tender
Pale petals are closed and chill;
To the dew, though it falls from the splendor
Of stars, it is silent still.

Let the darkness fall deep, and deliver
Unveiled to our weary eyes
The pearl by the Eden River
Our lily in Paradise.

LINES

To Mrs. Lucy E. Cairns

Upborne by angels in a world of sorrow,
In others' anguish losing half her own;
So taught of grief that darkened souls might borrow
Their light of sunshine from her lips alone!

Herself a seraph, whose unfolding pinions
And upward glance betray her better birth,
Yet lingering still amid the dull world's minions
To win some wanderer from the ills of earth.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

As fair of form as lily-pure of spirit,
Heaven watched, and guided in her upward way;
Ah! such as she are they who shall inherit
The strength and triumph of a better day.

THE "COMFORTER"

To his sister, Lucy E. T. Cairns

You may call; she will come. Not the shadow of
night

Shrouds a sorrow she shuns to meet,
And you shall not know by her steps so light
What sharpness hath pierced her feet:—

That the balm of her healing was bruised of pain,
The breath of a smitten lyre;
That the touch, so cool to your fevered brain,
Was purified by fire.

But you shall believe that a wing so swift,
And a voice of so sweet a tone,
Shall shine with the stars when the clouds uplift,
And sing by the great white throne.

FLOWERS AFTER FROST*

In memory of Harriot Coolidge Ticknor, aetat 62.

Another lesson, oh, gentle flowers,
Ye bring to the heart that grieves,
A word of love from our loved and lost
Is written upon your leaves.

*OCTOBER 19, 1854.

DEAREST SISTER:

I have gathered some beautiful "souvenirs" to-day since

TICKNOR'S POEMS

A written word from the saintly hands
That have gone to their holy rest,
With the frosts of winter upon their heads,
But summer within the breast.

They pass away as the isles of light
Go down from the purple west,
And their setting splendor is rare and bright
With the glory of the blest.

They fail as the dark'ning year departs,
They fade with the autumn flowers;
And the hand of Time, that stills their hearts,
Falls heavily on ours.

We take, as the warrior takes in strife,
The rank of those who die;
And we keep their watch in the war of life,
And we send their prayer on high,

For courage to walk in the ways of truth,
And the strength to keep at last,
'Mid the frosts of winter the bloom of youth
And the fragrance of the past.

1853

the frost, but as I had no safe conveyance I concluded to send you so much of the essence of them as I could extract.

I do not think that I have succeeded in giving utterance to the emotions with which they inspired me. The principal idea is of that feeling of "old age" and added responsibility which the death of those whom we love and honor never fails to communicate to me at least.

Like a soldier in battle when he sees the rank before him go down, he feels that the same blow has numbered him among the "forlorn hope"; and in such a case blessed is he who can look death as cheerfully in the face as these flowers.

Your loving brother,

FRANK.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

MARY

Mary H. Dillingham

Shall I whisper a name that was lovely of old,
When the tale of the infant Messiah was told—
The honored of God, in her sorrow sublime,
Still haunting the heart in the shadows of Time?

O'er the starlight of Judah the night mists were
 rolled,
On the Galilee's bosom the night winds were cold,—
When it woke on the midnight, so solemn and dim,
With the flame of a Star and the sound of a hymn,

Is its magic decayed? Is its mission fulfilled?
Is its memory cold, or its melody stilled?
Can its syllabled music still people the air
With the visions of love and the voices of prayer?

Yea, bright with the luster and sweet with the tone
Of the angels that sang and the Glory that shone,
Its echoes are soft, through the haze of the years,
With the breath of her sigh and the dew of her tears.

And still at the altar, and still at the hearth,
From the cradle of Christ to the ends of the earth,
As gentle in glory, as steadfast in gloom,
It tells of the Manger, the Cross, and the Tomb.

And many shall bless it, and many have blest,
In the morning of life, in the morrow of rest;
And its fullness of meaning its music shall keep
While a Mary shall watch or a Mary shall weep.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

THE PILGRIM

No staff, nor script, nor sandal shoon,
Oh, pilgrim, pure and frail!
No light to guide thee through the gloom
Of Death's dark, narrow vale.
With naked feet doth fearless tread
That cold and thorny path?
With folded hands doth meet the dread
And subtle tempter's wrath?

Pass on in peace, for staff and script
A Saviour's hand supplies,
And the pure light of Heaven fills
Thy soft uplifted eyes.
Pass on, the path of innocence
No terror shall assail;
And God shall be thy sure defence
In Death's dark, narrow vale.

SPERANS

Our life is gray, in silence down the aisles
The dead dreams slumber with their frozen smiles
And folded hands; while darkening year on year
Adds dust to gloom and seal to sepulchre.

A place to watch! If so some angel's tread
May stir the ashes where our loved lie dead;

Some censer kindle, or some seraph's hymn
Steal from the dawn adown the cloisters dim;

Till a soft splendor burns through all the tomb,
And tints the Parian with eternal bloom!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

WHAT, OH, MAN

"And what, Oh, man, hath the Lord required of thee but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"—MICAH vi: 8.

Do justice! while the slender thread
Above thine own unsheltered head
Restrains the wrath thy breath might free.
"Do justice!" Justice asks of thee!

Love mercy! while no heavenward prayer
Unblessed by blessing enters there,
That mercy may unmeasured be.
"Love mercy!" Mercy asks of thee!

Walk humbly! let the desert dusk
O'er buried pride and broken trust
Bear foot-prints of humility.
"Walk humbly," God requires of thee!

"Do justice," by thy sins forgiven,
"Love mercy," by thy hopes of heaven,
"Walk humbly with thy God," for He
Requires no other task of thee!

UNTO THE EVEN

Toilers till the eventide,
By all waters sowing wide,
Faint not for the summer's heat,
Halt not for the weary feet.
Forth! were labor's guerdon less
Than a crown of righteousness.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Wist we of the seed we sow
How the tender blade shall grow,
How the tiny germ may hold
The harvest of an hundred fold,—
Bud and blossom, how they swell,
Momently a miracle?

By our paths of pain and care
Still the lily blossoms fair,
And the sparrow finds her nest
In the temple's sacred rest,—
Witnessing with Him who saith
Be ye faithful unto death.

He who fixed the planet's place
Clothes the lily with its grace;
He who marks the sparrow's fall
Hath His mercy for us all,—
And His loving pity sees
That our life is more than these.

Therefore by the water's side
Toil we till the even tide,
Trusting while a flower may share
The bounty of His love and care,—
Toiling, were our guerdon less
Than a crown of righteousness.

REST IN THE LORD

Thy task is done, so let the sun
Through all his summer cycle run.

The seed is in the ground; resign
The rest to better Care than thine,—

TICKNOR'S POEMS

That watched ere Eden's glory grew,
And sprinkles this last mound with dew.

Guiding the cloudlet from the deep,
He biddeth His beloved sleep,

In foretaste, ere our summers cease,
Of yonder great white harvest—peace.

"EVEN UNTO THE END"

Darkness upon the troubled deep—
 A cry,—and none to save!
"Christ!" and the thunder of the sea
Sank to an infant's lullaby,
Sank to a summer calm, for He
 Was with them on the wave.

Darkness beside the lonely grave
 Where the loved Lazarus slept,—
"Christ," at whose feet the full heart cried,
"Thou Lord, and Lazarus had not died."
Christ, at whose call the dead replied,
 Was with them while they wept.

Ask thou, my soul, no sweeter stay,
 Seek thou no safer friend!
Christ with His feet upon the wave,
Christ, with the hand to heal and save,
Christ, from the cradle to the grave,
 Is with thee to the end.

TICKNOR'S POEMS

"THOUGH HE SLAY ME, YET WILL I
TRUST HIM"

A pure and child-like trust,—
Be this my better part—
To give Thee from the dust
An undefiled heart!

Bowed down, my Lord, not crushed
By Thine own good decree;
Be each emotion hushed
That trusts not still in Thee.

The oil of joy for tears
Thy love shall yet bestow;
And praise, through endless years,
For heaviness below!

For ashes shall the pride
Of beauty's garments be
To him who, sorely tried,
Still trusted, Lord, in Thee!

EASTER

Christ! arisen? Lift your eyes!
Lo! what glory fills the skies!
Winter's death is dead, and born
The summer's hope in springing corn.
While the lily cleaves the sod,
Who shall bind the Son of God?

Christ! arisen? The sun to-day
Unseals a tomb, and rolls away

TICKNOR'S POEMS

All mists of midnight like a stone,
All raiment save of light alone.
Shall the single shadow fall
On the Christ, the Lord of all?

Christ! arisen? Roman steel
Sentineled that stone and seal.
Rome, in her imperial power,
Watched until the dawning hour,—
Watched and witnessed, bowed and said,
“Christ is risen from the dead!”

Oh, by all an Age's trust,
By our darlings laid in dust,
In our griefs the single stay,
Of our joys the central ray,—
Cease, my doubt, thy sentry tread,
“Christ is risen from the dead!”

TORCH HILL, 1869

CHRISTMAS CAROL

With the angels that sang and smiled,
With the angels that smile and sing,
From the cradle of Christ the child
To the coming of Christ our King;
Till Bethlehem's starlight bloom
Unto the perfect day,
Let wisdom and innocence bring
Carol and offering
To Christ on this Christmas day.

Songs in our melancholy?—
Smiles in our house of woe?—
There are thorns and blood in the holly,
There are tears in the mistletoe;
Shall their verdure be counted folly
By Him who ordained it? No!

Our past! let it pass to the flowers
That cover our churchyard clay;
To-morrow?—(God governs the hours);
Let us bury in beautiful flowers
The crucified feet to-day!

Peace and good-will! that carol still,
From Christmas so far away!
Good-will and peace, till the world shall cease
With its wars on a Christmas day!

And I tell you, gentle and simple,
That greater than power or pelf
Is the text from our Lord's own temple,—
Love all as you love yourself;
Better than brimstone poppers,
Or all the fiery trains
That fizzle away your coppers
And fuzzle away your brains,
Is the moral here which your carol
With all its might maintains,—
That the world doth move by weight of love,
And not of lead or brains.

And your wisdom were stupid blindness,
And your strength of how little use,
To that drop of the oil of kindness
In the widow's unwasted cruse!
It moves! let us keep it moving!
Hasten the happy day
When all the world's gone loving,
And Christmas comes—to stay!
Such a tree as our eyes shall see
That winter shall warm the ages,
And waken the pure in heart as sure
As your laborer works for wages.

Christmas. 1868

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Let the gates of night unbar
Before the bright and morning star,
Let the shining Seraphim
Chant the Christ-Child's cradle hymn,
Let the innocent and wise
Join that carol from the skies.
Let the little children sing
At Thy cradle, Christ our King.

Songs of prophets from of old
Sung by saints on harps of gold,
Blent with triumph and with tears,
Trembling through two thousand years,
All that life of love and pain
Wakes and walks the earth again,
While the little children sing
At Thy cradle, Christ our King.

Till Thy coming! In that hour
Of Thy majesty and power
When the star of steadfast ray
Brightens to the perfect day,—
When the heavens shall shout and when
The earth shall answer, "Peace, Amen."
Let the little children sing
At Thy Triumph, Christ our King.

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

Recall, while now thy longing gaze
Grows dim with more than autumn's haze,
Of all the walks thy feet have pressed,—
That path the peaceablest to rest:

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Of fountains that thy need have nursed,
That "well" the sweetest to thy thirst:

Of flowers—and lo! thy hands were full—
That blossom the most beautiful:

Of touch and tone, through all the past,
The tenderest and lingering last:

That radiance of the vanished years,
Most radiant for thy very tears:

Name that which, trembling like a star,
Shines with our loved and lost, so far;

Yet nearest to our inner dreams
Brings the soft flow of Eden's streams;

Lighting the shadows where we stand
With angel eyes on either hand:—

Mute lips, or with hosannas, these
Make answer with our memories,

In music blending to express
Pure beauty in its perfectness—
Earth's charm, Heaven's glory—
"Holiness."

TORCH HILL,
March 10, 1869

THE CHURCH

Dear mother, in this weary waste
Of error and of woe
How sweet the smile, how soft the rest
Thy little children know!

TICKNOR'S POEMS

The trumpet's clangor at thy wall
Stirs not thy peace above;
We hear, and only hear, the call
Of our dear mother's love.

Her touch upon our infant brow,
Her tears above our dead,
Her tones of tenderness are now
As in the years that fled.

Nor fades of all her bloom and balm
One blossom from her wreath,
More radiant in celestial calm
For all the storms beneath.

Bright beacon, nearest to the skies
Of all that light the sea,—
Blest haven, where our treasure lies
And where our hearts would be!

Dear mother, till our labors rest,
And all our sorrows cease!
Who clings the closest to thy breast
Best knows thy perfect peace.

THE CEMETERY

A churchyard walk, and by the way
We saw on either hand
More symbols of the world's "decay"
Than of the "better land"!

With more of rigid carpentry,
And less of bloom and leaf,

TICKNOR'S POEMS

Than tokened brotherhood in death
Or fellowship in grief.

And yet, without these mouldering pales
'Twere easy to o'erspread
With Eden grace these silent vales,
This city of the dead.

Without this mass of tangled brier
Yon oak were not less green;
And happily yon heavenward spire
Were more distinctly seen!

The "vexed Bermuda" here might rest
In undisturbed retreat,
On many a long-forgotten breast
And long-neglected street.

The dead white column, cross and urn
With olive shadowed o'er,
Might teach us, when we come to mourn,
This much, if nothing more:

That vainly o'er our lost delights
The pomp of marble towers
Without the gentle care that writes
Its Martha-thought in flowers.

TORCH HILL,
October 16, 1858

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